INQUIRY

MAGAZINE

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KARL HESS ON GOLDWATER
MURRAY N. ROTHBARD ON PODHORETZ
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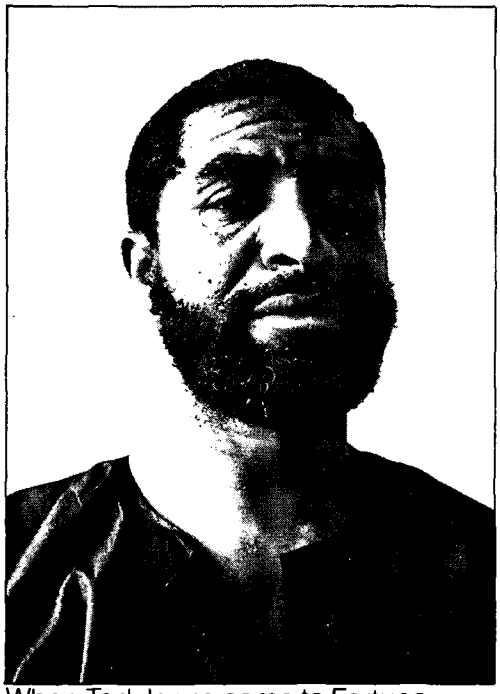

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INQUIRY®

DECEMBER 10, 1979

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Typography by MACKENZIE-HARRIS AND SOLOTYPE

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A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

THE "BACK OF THE book" is a phrase that for me has always conjured up images of the literary equivalent of a Selma bus in the sixties. Precisely why reviews of books and the arts must follow the "feature" articles in a magazine I've never understood. Although it is a tradition to which we do, ultimately, bow, it is nevertheless gratifying to have two issues a year (this being one) in which the reviews are featured. This issue, in fact, is a splendid example of how *INQUIRY*'s "back of the book," under the able supervision of senior editor Ralph Raico, endeavors to match reviewer and author with sensitivity and an eye toward illumination. From Karl Hess's bittersweet review of Barry Goldwater's memoirs to Murray Rothbard's deflation of Norman Podhoretz's latest piece of self-puffery, our holiday book issue is one I think you will enjoy.

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RES PUBLICA

The fungus among us

■ A couple of years ago, when some international trade statistics came fluttering across the desk of Republican Representative Richard T. Schulze of Pennsylvania, alarm bells started ringing.

The figures showed that canned mushrooms from the Orient were capturing a growing share of the U.S. market. So Schulze, whose district considers itself the mushroom capital of the world, went into action. He formed a congressional mushroom caucus. The fungus forum now has 61 members from New York to California who can tell you more than you ever dare ask about the state of the American mushroom.

—Washington Post, Oct. 7, 1979

More spectacular than the Moscow Olympics

■ "Campaigns have always been extremely expensive in Louisiana," says Dr. Edward F. Renwick, a Loyola University [Baton Rouge] political scientist and pollster. "Politics are entertainment here. It's a sport—bigger than football, even.

"The governor's race is a Super Bowl of politics. The governor of this state is almost a constitutional dictator," he added. The amount of money in contracts and patronage he controls is incredible. That attracts money, and politicians will spend whatever's available."

—Washington Post, Oct. 27, 1979

Ignorance of the regulations is no excuse

■ John Quarles, former deputy administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and a sympathetic but critical student of the regulatory process, figures it will take from now until the start of the 21st century to issue regulations from laws already on the books.

—Washington Post, Oct. 21, 1979

It also cures disease

■ The band boosters club at the high school that President Carter visited at Bardstown, Ky., last July is raising money by selling pieces of the carpet he stood on.

—Washington Post, Sept. 24, 1979

Oil hits astrological prices

■ You may think that the outcome of our oil crisis rests on the joint decisions of world leaders after years of scientific research, weighed alternatives and high-level international conferences.

But you are wrong.

Even now, this very minute, Sheik Ahmed "Zaki" Yamani, the oil minister of Saudi Arabia, may well be twirling his astroglobe, or poring over his astrological charts, immersed in his calculations.

Because, you see, Sheik Yamani is an astrologer and according to those who know him intimately, he never makes a major decision without consulting his charts.

—Washington Post, Oct. 22, 1979

A propaganda session for Mr. Rabin will be arranged

■ A censorship board composed of five [Israeli] Cabinet members prohibited former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin from including in his memoirs a first-person account of the expulsion of 50,000 Palestinian civilians from their homes near Tel Aviv during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

In it, Mr. Rabin attributes the final decision on expulsion to David Ben-Gurion, one of Israel's founders and its first Prime Minister, who died in 1973. Mr. Rabin says that some Israeli soldiers refused to participate in driving out the Arabs and that afterward, propaganda sessions were required to soothe the consciences of embittered troops.

—New York Times, Oct. 23, 1979

Would you mind saying that again into the chimney?

■ Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt, according to a White House employee of that bygone era, used to hide a stenographer in a chimney-like wooden structure to take secret minutes of crucial meetings.

—Los Angeles Times, Oct. 29, 1979

Milk of human kindness

■ John Connally doesn't suffer foo
easily. He has, his staff concedes, a ver
low tolerance for what he conside
dumb questions and human frailty.

—Los Angeles Times, Oct. 31, 1979

Boo!

■ Richard M. Nixon is head and shou
ders above President Carter, "St
Wars" villain Darth Vader is still ridi
high and Zorro is slashing his way ba
from obscurity.

The realistic look is in for Hallowe
this year, and shop owners say parer
are shelling out as much as $60 for t
costumes their children will wear We
nesday night.

"Carter's not doing too good," sa
Dorothy Kerns of the Costume Holid
House in Fremont, Ohio. "Nixon mas
are still the best-selling ones as far
political figures go."

—Los Angeles Times, Oct. 29, 1979

Doing what we do best

■ Energy Secretary Charles W. Dunca
has appealed to Congress to exclu
President Carter's proposed multib
lion-dollar energy security corporati
and energy mobilization board fro
most of the laws and regulations Co
gress has passed to control the feder
bureaucracy.

He specifically urged that the ener
corporation be exempted from sunshi
rules that keep government proceedin
open to the public, the Freedom of Infc
mation Act, and the recently enact
government ethics act, which plac
limits on so-called "revolving-door" er
ployment and related conflict-of-intere
issues.

—Washington Post, Oct. 27, 1979

Honey, there's something wrong with the dishes—they're not washing themselves

■ Rep. Joe Moakley, a Boston Dem
crat, will introduce a bill next week ca
ing for cigarettes that must go out with
five minutes of the last puff. And at
hearing in Los Angeles next week,
California Superior Court judge will d
cide whether a plaintiff can press what
thought to be an unprecedented case.
is a damage suit against the Brown
Williamson Tobacco Corp. for failing
make its cigarettes self-extinguishin
The plaintiff, severely burned after fa
ing asleep while he was smoking
Raleigh, contends that the cigarette w
a defective product because it didn't
out by itself.

—Newsweek, Oct. 8, 1979

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atching up with inflation

Credit crunch

NOT A WEEK HAS PASSED, THESE LAST few months, without the newswires buzzing about yet another increase in interest rates. The Federal Reserve's discount rate—which is charged by the central bank on loans to the gest banks in the country, and influences every other in-est rate—usually moves no more than one percent a year. It s soared 2½ percent in the past three months. And the ime rate, charged by the banks to their largest and best stomers, has jumped in the same period from 11¾ percent (at this writing) 15¼ percent. It may well go even higher.

Interest rates are clearly reaching "threshold of pain" els at which individuals and companies are being squeezed t of the lending market—in some cases finding it difficult to rrow money at all except at rates that were not so long ago nsidered the select preserve of loan sharks. Since many ople think the Federal Reserve Board is the "prime mover" ıen it comes to interest rates, the pressure, with elections ming up, is now on the Fed to moderate the surge. All of is brings up some interesting questions. Are interest rates aded higher still? Is the Federal Reserve the leader or the lower? And finally, what effect will this have on our econ-ıy?

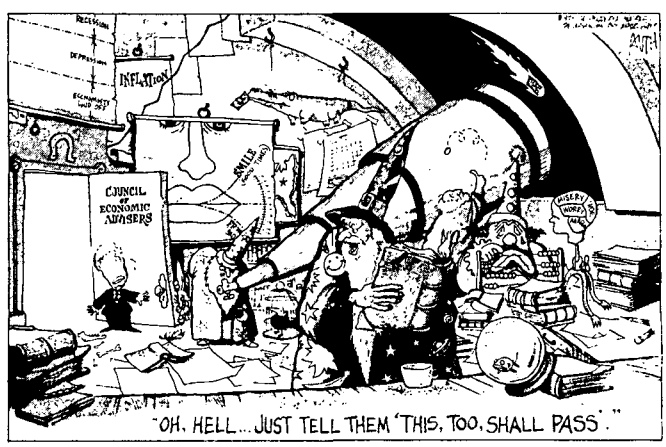
Let's begin by examining the nature of an interest rate. It is, nply, the price of money: the price a lender asks for giving up e use of a sum of money for a certain period, and the price a rrower pays for having the use of that money now. The istorical" rate of interest, the annual rate at which the ıder has paid for giving up his money, has been about 3 rcent of the sum loaned. So why the 15 percent rates today? :cause the historical rate depended upon the amount loaned :aining its value. What good is charging a 3 percent interest te on money that at current rates of inflation will be worth 13 rcent less next year? The lender would suffer a guaranteed is of 10 percent.

It is now generally recognized that the expansion of the pply of money makes each unit of it worth less, meaning that takes more units to buy the same thing: in short, inflation. ıt not so well known is the way in which inflation distorts ıny aspects of the economy, interest rates among them. Let's y a surging inflationary period is just starting: New money ters the economy through the banking system, and banks ddenly find themselves flush with the cash provided them the Federal Reserve, the government's central bank. They ve more money to lend, and do so at lower rates. General ice increases have been moderate, and no one worries about ing paid back with less valuable money. Most borrowed ɔney goes to businessmen, who, suddenly finding it easier to : money and thinking themselves suddenly richer, proceed to expand their concerns. They invest in new equipment and plant, in turn stimulating companies that supply such things. This, however, lures scarce resources away from the sectors of the economy more directly supplying the consumer. As the new money works its way through the economy, prices are bid up—as more money makes each unit of it worth less. This feeds on itself as people come to believe that prices will keep rising.

This is exactly the course that events have been taking for the past few years. Prices are now rising at a 13 to 14 percent clip, and therefore interest rates must be at least three points above that. Until recently, rates were several points below that. Even the record-breaking 12¼ percent prime rate two months ago meant that, at a 13 percent inflation rate, borrowers were actually being paid to borrow money. This is an absurd situation, and thus it came as no surprise when the demand for loans soared. Since March, it has risen to a whopping 33 percent annual rate. Rates were too low then; even at 15 percent they still are. They still do not reflect the real rate of dollar depreciation, or more subjectively, the vast increases in the public's worries about inflation—a recent Gallup poll revealed that fully 86 percent of Americans expect inflation to be as bad or worse in a year. The rise in interest rates we are now witnessing is then the inevitable adjustment to past inflation.

Moreover, business investment in equipment and plant made with this "free money" continues to soar. The *Wall Street Journal* of September 24 reported that machine-tool orders during August spurted a huge 19 percent beyond July's level, and were 15 percent above those of a year earlier. Machine tools are precisely the sort of mistaken "capital goods" investment that businesses turn to in times of artificially low interest rates.

But when interest rates finally catch up to and pass the inflation rate, businesses must cut back on the expansions made under the illusion that they had more money than they actually had. The coming recession, replete with its credit crunch, will see these "capital goods" sectors of the economy hurt to the extent that artificially low interest rates attracted overinvestment in them. What a recession does, in effect, is to shift resources out of the inflated capital-goods sector back into



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the consumer-goods area, where the resources can serve actual consumer desires.

It was inevitable that interest rates would soar as soon as monetary inflation took off. The Fed, by raising its interest rate, is only reacting to the fact that people are crowding the loan market because existing interest rates did not adequately take inflation into account. Sadly, interest rates will keep rising until lenders are not penalized for temporarily parting with their money. Finally, we should realize that the recent booming business expansion is about to end, and the resultant recession will drive home the lesson—for those who heed it—that inflation brings only distortion and economic misery in its wake.

Recidivism on the left

Ready for Teddy

THE MOST REFRESHING CONTRIBUTION of the New Left of the sixties was to repudiate the New Deal–Fair Deal–Great Society tradition that had gripped the left since the promulgation of the Popular Front line in the mid-thirties. Led by Earl Browder and the Communist party, the left had dutifully taken its place as a tame appendage of the Democratic party; there leftists were virtually indistinguishable from their lib-lab Democratic colleagues. As good liberals, these leftists proceeded to answer all social problems with the nostrum of bigger government and increased federal spending. Any questioning of this panacea of Big Government was considered a reactionary and Neanderthal attempt to throw sand in the machinery of inevitable social progress. The socialists in this liberal coalition were content to march toward their goal by adding continually to the powers of the Leviathan state. In this way, the left contributed immeasurably to the building of our modern welfare-warfare state.

Under the pressure of the Vietnam War and of the student rebellion against a politicized and bureaucratized university system, the adherents of the New Left rethought their basic outlook, repudiated their Old Left forebears, and broke cleanly with the New Deal tradition; they coined the pungent term

"corporate liberal"—an accurate description of what the le had become. And when members of the Old Left calle plaintively on their sons and daughters to take their appointe places in the left wing of the old Democratic coalition, Ne Left historian Staughton Lynd scornfully termed this trac tional policy a "coalition with the Marines." And so it was.

The New Left went on from its day-to-day concerns wi the draft, war, and a corrupted university system to repudia the entire Progressive–New Deal approach of twentiet century American politics—an approach that had fasten government control on every aspect of American life, persor and economic, and had thrust the American government in the imperial role of world policeman and conqueror. Gover ment regulation and domination of the economy were longer seen as a people's uprising against the interests, but the cartelizing of industry via a partnership between F Government and elements of Big Business, with Big Unio fostered and taken into camp. And so the New Left w analyzing not simply the Johnson era but the entire system state capitalism that had been built up during the previo decades.

The Vietnam War and the student revolution are long gor Have the remaining New Leftists kept faith with their ov analysis? Sad to say, they are back at the old stand, taking th ancient places in the left wing of the Democratic coalition, hailing the advent of Teddy Kennedy. It is Back to Browc with a vengeance, one more coalition with the Marines.

Many prominent former New Leftists are now members the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee headed longtime democratic Marxist Michael Harrington. In a rece interview explaining his support of Kennedy, Harrington c clared: "Teddy is the best liberal in America at a time wh liberalism is not enough. We need an anti-corporate can date, willing to stand up and say, 'We've got to attack t corporations.' Teddy doesn't do that. But [a Kennedy victc would] set in motion forces very beneficial to the formation an anti-corporate left. At first, if he wins, [we should] give h a chance, a honeymoon."

If this doubletalk makes little sense, Harrington at le realizes that it is squarely in the Browder tradition. He g on: "It is a dangerous analogy, but during the popular fr period, Earl Browder was the left wing of the FDR moveme . . . In that period the Communist Party made mass gains a played a significant role in the development of the CIO. . . . T CP is not my model, but in many respects that strategy work well. We now want the democratic socialist equivalent."

It is not surprising, of course, that such leftish union lead as William Winpisinger of the Machinists Union and Do las Fraser of the Auto Workers are ardent Kennedy suppc ers. Kennedy does embody, as no Presidential candidate l in recent elections, the old New Deal lib-lab coalition. But i discouraging to find that former New Leftists claim now, Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway describe it, tl the "greatest recent advances" made by the left were under Kennedy and Johnson administrations of the 1960s. Is Vietnam War to be forgotten so soon? Apparently so, ami the euphoria engendered by the prospect of a return Camelot.

Perhaps the nadir of this kind of response was the profou statement of one leftist community organizer in explain why it is better to be part of the Democratic party: "If you ar member of the Democratic Party you begin with 25 percen the vote, whereas if you run outside the party you start w nothing." Is this the insight and vision to which the New I has been reduced?

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FIRST AMENDMENT WATCH

NAT HENTOFF

The new legions of erotic decency

SHE IS IN CHARGE OF A television op-ed page on a public broadcasting station in the East, nd she is troubled. A few days before, nore than 5000 crusaders against por-ography had marched through New ork City's Times Square with a boom-ng bass drum chanting, "Clean it up, hut it down, make New York a safer own!" Pointing to stores stocked with iverse printed and filmed fantasies of exual degradation of women, they hanted again: "Two, four, six, eight, ornography is woman-hate!"

Most of the marchers were women, nd though small contingents came om traditional Comstockian organiza-ions (like the Morality Action Commit-ee of Jackson Heights), the organizers nd the vast majority of the troops were eminists. The protest had been con-ened by Women Against Pornography, nd a number of its leaders—Gloria teinem, Bella Abzug, Susan Brownmil-er—were appropriately in the front line.

"I'm a civil libertarian," the woman om public television says to me, "and o are most of the people who were in Times Square. But really, does the First Amendment have anything to do with nerchandising violence against women? Because that's what it is. When you see vomen being tied and beaten, how can ou possibly want to protect that?"

The march took place on October 20 f this year. A month before, Women Against Pornography had held a confer-nce in New York to which women came rom cities across the country, as well as rom England and Ireland. The insistent consensus was that something must be done to curb, if not yet obliterate, the $4-billion-a-year pornography industry.

But what? The leaders, mindful of their civil-liberties backgrounds, are careful to avoid advocating outright censorship. Most of them. Yet Susan Brownmiller, during a 1978 debate at New York University Law School on "Degradation of Women Versus Right of Free Speech" showed her own inclinations. She asked members of the audience who considered themselves First Amendment absolutists to raise their hands. About a hundred, mostly men, did. "It's so easy," Brownmiller said scathingly, "to be a First Amendment absolutist when the issue is the pornographer's right to make millions off the bodies of women."

During that same debate, Phyllis Chesler, a feminist, psychologist, and author, seemed to speak for many of the women present: "Pornography is just not a subject I can discuss reasonably. It's like a Jew trying to discuss *Mein Kampf* reasonably, or a black trying to discuss the Ku Klux Klan reasonably."

I have heard this analogy from a number of women against pornography, as well as a corollary polemical point made by Susan Brownmiller recently in an attack on the American Civil Liberties Union's stand against the suppression of pornography: "I wonder if the ACLU's position might change if, come tomorrow morning, the book stores and movie theaters in Times Square were devoted not to the humiliation of women by rape and torture as they currently are, but to a systematized, commercially successful propaganda machine depicting the sadistic pleasures of gassing Jews or lynching blacks."

The ACLU's position, of course, would not change. And indeed, the ACLU has supported the First Amendment rights of both Nazis and the Klan in a number of contexts. When it has done so, the ACLU's critics—including numerous dismayed members—have argued that the Nazis and the Klan are in the destructive business of "incitement," and so their speech is actually integral to the pernicious actions they wish to bring about. Women Against Pornography make the same claim in their campaign. Yet, as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said in 1925: "Every idea is an incitement."

And Hugo Black, when he was asked about pornography in 1962, said: "My view is, without deviation, without exception, without any ifs, buts, or whereases, that freedom of speech means that you shall not do something to people either for the views they have or the views they express or the words they speak or write. . . . I realize that there are dangers in freedom of speech, but I do not believe there are any halfway marks."

WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGraphy and its counterparts in other cities are unpersuaded by this notion of a total liberty of speech that would include pornography. Whether they want to shut down merchants who degrade women, or to extend public nuisance statutes against them, or to zone them into smut ghettos, they insist that pornography not only "incites," but leads inexorably to violence against women. Some of them just *know* this. Susan Brownmiller, when asked by a reporter for the *Boston Phoenix* for statistics and case histories detailing this link between pornography and real-life rape—among other forms of assault—said, "The statistics will come. We supply the ideology; it's for other people to come up with the statistics."

Consider the infinite dangers of suppressing speech on the basis of "motivation."

Other women against pornography do cite studies showing that men who commit sexual violence tend to be consumers of pornography. Other studies come to a contrary conclusion: There is no such linkage, they say, no proof that reading or viewing experiences change basic character structure. Consider, furthermore, the infinite dangers of trying to suppress speech on the basis of "motivation" or "incitement" as determined by psychiatrists and psychologists whose "expertise," as has been demonstrated in this journal, is so dangerously uncertain.

NAT HENTOFF writes a monthly column on civil liberties for INQUIRY. His book The First Freedom: A Tumultuous History of Free Speech in America *will soon be published by Delacorte.*

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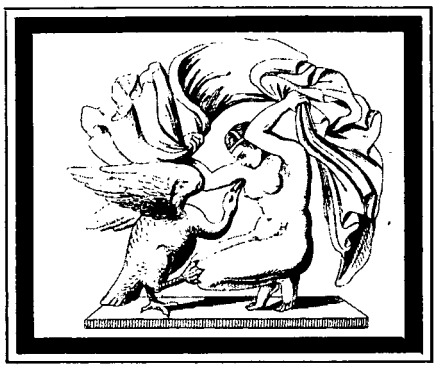
A memorable index of just how difficult it is to predict what kinds of "incitement" will lead to the basest of conduct was provided by Justice William O. Douglas in his 1966 concurring opinion in *Memoirs* v. *Massachusetts*. After noting how futile it would be "even for a censor to remove all that might possibly stimulate [violent] sexual conduct,"



Douglas quoted from an article in the *Wayne Law Review* two years earlier:

". . . there is no 'hard core.' Everything, every idea, is capable of being obscene if the personality perceiving it so apprehends it. . . . Heinrich Pommerenke, who was a rapist, abuser, and mass slayer of women in Germany, was prompted in his series of ghastly deeds by Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*. During the scene of the Jewish women dancing about the Golden Calf, all the doubts of his life came clear: Women were the source of the world's trouble and it was his mission to punish them for this and to execute them. Leaving the theater, he slew his first victim in a park nearby.

"John George Haigh, the British vampire who sucked his victims' blood through soda straws and dissolved their drained bodies in acid baths, first had his murder-inflicting dreams and vampire-longing from watching the 'voluptuous' procedure of—an Anglican High Church Service!"

Women Against Pornography, however, have other reasons besides "links" to violence for wanting to curb producers and consumers of pornography. They, like Chief Justice Warren Burger in *Miller* v. *California*, the 1973 pornography case, are concerned with making this a "decent society." They are not, as one of them, Robin Morgan, emphasizes, against "genuine erotic art or literature." It's the garbage they want to sweep away. But how do you tell the difference?

Simple, says Gloria Steinem. At the September conference held by Women Against Pornography, Steinem explained: "The word pornography in its very origins means 'writing about women captives or slaves.' Erotica is something quite different, portraying love as something chosen. Pornography is not sex, and sex need not be violent or aggressive at all. It is violence and domination that are pornographic."

To which radical feminist Ellen Willis has responded in the *Village Voice*: "Because it is less specific, less suggestive of actual sexual activity, 'erotica' is regularly used as a euphemism for 'classy porn.' Pornography expressed in literary language or expensive photography and consumed by the upper middle class is 'erotica'; the cheap stuff, which can't pretend to any purpose but getting people off, is smut. The erotica-versus-porn approach . . . endorses the portrayal of sex as we would like it to be, and condemns the portrayal of sex as it too often is. But if pornography is to arouse, it must appeal to the feelings we have, not those that by some utopian standard we ought to have. . . . In practice, attempts to sort out good erotica from bad porn inevitably come down to 'What turns me on is erotica; what turns you on is pornographic.'"

WILLIS MAY BE ONTO something. Women Against Pornography insist that they have enlisted in this battle because pornography leads to rape, mutilation, battered women, and battered children. Even, says Robin Morgan, to "murder as an average sexual act." There is no doubt they believe this, expecting that the statistics will come later. But there may also be a class tinge to this movement, as there is to the Supreme Court's own ways of trying to differentiate between protected erotica and patently offensive, hard-core pornography. In *American Constitutional Law* (Foundation Press, 1978), Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe observes: "Understandably anxious to avoid the embarrassing literary censorship of early times, the Court has retreated to a posture in which the erotic tastes of the educated and well bred emerge as part of the 'grand conception of the First Amendment and its high purposes in the historic struggle for freedom,' while the less fashionable eroticism of the masses becomes the mere subject of 'commercial exploitation of obscene material.'" This amounts, Tribe says, "to selective tolerance for the tastefully salacious coupled with contempt for the coarsely vulgar."

So, in the marches and speeches of women against pornography, there seems to me an only partially disguised obbligato to the dominant, dark theme of pornography as the destroyer of women: It's also *dirty*. Vulgar, coarse, lower-class filth. As in the prefeminist days, ladies are ladies, and God knows what the building superintendent reads down there in his room with those pictures on the walls.

Although the cast has changed—big-city feminists and their sympathizers having taken the foreground away from small-town library boards and church-based smut hunters—the basic issue is the same. And Joan Kennedy Taylor got to its core in the September 1977 *Libertarian Review*:

"People have a right to communicate their values to each other. We may deplore these values. We may wish to change them. But believers in individual rights have to accept the responsibility of arguing—or privately boycotting—such values: they may not merely suppress their expression by government force.

And government force means not only flat-out censorship. It also means devising expanded ways of squashing pornographers through public-nuisance laws, as well as zoning codes and other uses of the state as a club against hateful expression. Feminist Susan Jacoby, who confessed "First Amendment junkie," reminds her sisters that if they do enlist the state, in any way, in their jihad against pornography, they themselves "will not be the arbiters of good taste if it becomes easier to harass, prosecute and convict people on obscenity charges. With newly sharpened teeth, nuisance laws and zoning ordinances can be the used by the state against other threats to "a decent society"—in some towns, for instance, against feminist displays and publications concerning lesbianism.

As for mounting a private boycott that, of course, is the right of women against pornography. I shall not join them because, obviously, the intent of those boycotts is to get enough people to stay away so that the stores and movie houses will close and so that supermarkets stocking certain magazines will take them off the shelves. And that is hardly a proper pursuit for someone who values diversity of expression.

But these women proclaim—Bella Abzug among them—that boycotting in no way interferes with diversity of expression because pornography is not protected speech. The Supreme Court has indeed cast pornography outside the pale. At least it has tried to, when it could figure out what it was. There is, for instance, Justice Potter Stewart's

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notorious confession in a 1964 concurring opinion in *Jacobellis* v. *Ohio*. Striving mightily to define unprotected "hard-core pornography," Stewart said: "I shall not attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description, and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it."

In such confusion are pornographers sent to jail.

IN A MORE RECENT CASE, *Marks* v. *United States* (1977), Justice John Paul Stevens dissected the entire notion of punishing pornography. Though his views do not yet reflect the majority of the Court, they are unassailable as to the logic of liberty:

"However distasteful these materials are to some of us, they are nevertheless a form of communication and entertainment acceptable to a substantial segment of society; otherwise, they would have no value in the marketplace."

Stevens then cited the Court's 1969 decision in *Stanley* v. *Georgia* that a citizen has the right to read or see anything he likes, however "pornographic," in the privacy of his own home. Stevens asked therefore how it was logically possible to prosecute a pornographer for providing someone with a book or film that he has the constitutional right to have in his home.

"Third," Stevens concluded, "the present constitutional standards, both substantive and procedural, which apply to these prosecutions are so intolerably vague that evenhanded enforcement of the law is a virtual impossibility. Indeed, my brief experience on the Court has persuaded me that grossly disparate treatment of similar offenders is a characteristic of the criminal enforcement of obscenity law."

Of course the standards are intolerably vague for, as William O. Douglas put it, "There are as many different definitions of obscenity as there are men and women, and they are as unique to the individual as his dreams." (He also meant "hard-core pornography.")

But such grandly illusory banners will continue to wave like one during the recent Times Square march: "WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY. STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN." These women may succeed in doing violence against free speech but as for the rest, in John Milton's warning, "They are not skillful considerers of human things, who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin."

BREAD & CIRCUSES

PHIL STANFORD

Don't mess with Chung

CHUNG KEE YONG IS THE editor, publisher, reporter, and chief typist of the *Han Min Shinbo*, which he produces from a tiny office above a grocery store in the Washington, D.C., suburb of Arlington, Virginia. If he had the money, he says, he would like to hire a typist. But he probably couldn't find one: There are precious few people in the Washington area qualified to use a Korean typewriter. So maybe in this instance, at least, the lack of money actually saves him some trouble. He smiles at the thought, enjoying the irony.

Chung has been publishing the *Han Min Shinbo* for more than a decade now, first in San Francisco, and since 1972 in Washington. It comes out more or less every week and its press run is 3000 or more, depending on how much money Chung has at the time. It is, to be sure, a small newspaper, but there are those who hate it very much.

At first, says Chung, Korean government agents tried to buy him off. Once he was offered a position in the Korean government if he would stop publishing. Another time he was promised $300,000 with which he could buy his own printing plant, on the condition that he would then publish a pro-government newspaper. Unthinkable as the offer was, telling about it still serves to remind him of how he has had to scrape to publish the *Han Min Shinbo*. As one who has refused to embrace either the hard-line conservative or leftist position common among members of the Korean exile community, he has never had an easy time raising money.

When the bribes didn't work they tried threats. Chung started getting phone calls in the middle of the night. Sometimes the warnings were explicit. Sometimes he would pick up the phone and there would be only an eerie silence. And sometimes, he says, there would be a high whirring sound, "like something in a horror movie." Once when Chung was out of town on business his wife answered the phone and a man's voice informed her that unless Chung stopped slandering the government she would find herself a widow. In June, a former top official in the South Korean embassy in Washington who had recently defected told Chung that at one time KCIA agents in the embassy had discussed killing him. Chung says he won't be surprised if sometime they try.

Chung came to the United States in 1965 after he was informed that he could either leave Korea or plan to spend a lot of time in jail. He had already been arrested seven times for his part, as president of the national Federation of Political Science Students, in helping to organize demonstrations against the then emerging police state in South Korea. Usually, he says, he was held for a few days or a week and then released. Once he was kept in prison for a month and a half. "But they hadn't started to torture yet," he says. "That started about 1967."

When bribes didn't work, ominous phone calls began in the middle of the night.

Chung started the *Han Min Shinbo* in 1968, and since that time has used the paper to report to the Korean community in the United States (which is currently estimated at more than a quarter of a million) about the deepening repression in their homeland. Korea has been a police state at least since the 1961 coup that brought Park Chung Hee to power. However, the Yushin Constitution,

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adopted in 1972 by a referendum that was held during a period of martial law, has brought the suppression of individual rights there to almost surreal heights. Under the Yushin Constitution, virtually all governmental powers are centralized in the hands of the president: he appoints one-third of the National Assembly, he appoints all judges, and he appoints a "constitutional committee" that has the power to reject laws passed by the National Assembly. In addition, the president has the power to issue "Emergency Decrees" whenever he decides that national security is threatened. This article of the constitution has resulted in a succession of decrees, culminating in the notorious Emergency Decree Number 9, of 1975, which prohibits criticism of all government officials, bans political meetings and demonstrations, and even outlaws all criticism of the 1972 constitution.

According to Chung, there has been no turn for the better since Jimmy Carter, who has made such an issue of human rights, took office. The much publicized release in December of 4000 political prisoners, on the occasion of Park's inauguration, was little more than a publicity stunt, says Chung. The World Council of Churches was able to discover only 30 of that total who were actually political prisoners released because of the so-called amnesty. The rest either were not political prisoners or had already served out their sentences. Since late June, when Carter visited Korea, conditions have actually deteriorated, with the expulsion of the opposition leader from the National Assembly, the walkout of the entire opposition party, and most recently, the imposition of martial law. Today, says Chung, there are approximately 500 political prisoners in Korea; thousands more are under constant police surveillance. Nor has the assassination of Park Chung Hee made any difference.

OVER THE YEARS, THE HAN Min Shinbo has reported on those who have been imprisoned and, in many cases, tortured for opposing government policies. Some of them Chung knows personally. One, of course, is Kim Dae Jung, who finished second to Park in the 1971 presidential election. Following the election he went into exile, was kidnapped in Japan in 1973 by the KCIA and brought back to Korea, where he was made to stand trial for the supposed violation of election laws. In 1975 Kim Dae Jung was given a one-year sentence but allowed to remain out of jail pending an appeal. In 1976, while waiting for his appeal to be heard, Kim and a number of other Korean leaders signed a "Manifesto for Democracy" which, because it criticized the Yushin Constitution, brought him into violation of Decree Number 9. The sentence was five years. Last December Kim was released from prison and placed under house arrest.

It was Kim Dae Jung who, during a trip to the United States in 1971, persuaded Chung to move his newspaper from San Francisco to Washington, where it might have greater exposure.

Since that time, Chung has been a spokesman for Kim in this country. Over the years he has kept in close contact with Kim, sometimes directly, by phone or letter, or when that was impossible because Kim was in prison, through Kim's friends and relatives in Korea. For a while after Kim was removed from prison and placed under house arrest it was possible to call him at his home. However, in October, after the opposition party members walked out of the National Assembly and the student riots began in Pusan and Masan, Kim Dae Jung was once again sealed off from the outside world. Chung says that when he calls now all he gets is a busy signal.

Another political prisoner is the poet Kim Chi Ha. He was a grade behind Chung at a private high school in Seoul they attended. "We didn't think much about him then," says Chung. "He didn't become famous until he went to the university. He was a poor boy, from the south of Korea. Even then, I think he had tuberculosis."

For writing poems that ridiculed the government and Korean society, Kim Chi Ha was imprisoned and tortured in 1970 and again in 1972. In 1974 he published his poem "Cry of the People" and once again he was arrested, both for his writings and for supporting a studen group that was accused of organizin demonstrations against the Park regime This time he was sentenced to death. A a result of international pressure th sentence was later commuted to life i prison, and, in December, to twent years. However, it is unlikely that Kir Chi Ha will survive fifteen more years i prison. He has long suffered from tube culosis, and the years he has alread spent there have nearly destroyed hir The picture that one sees of him now, a artist's drawing, shows a wasted, ho low-eyed man, already aged.

Chung has a snapshot taken at Kir Chi Ha's wedding in 1964. It shows th bride and groom standing next to tiered wedding cake. The bride, e quisitely beautiful in a long white dres is smiling. Kim Chi Ha, who is wearin a stylish tuxedo, looks young and happ There is absolutely no way to relate th person in the picture to the broken ol man in the drawing.

The case of the motion-picture dire tor Shin Sangok is more recent and le widely known. In the fall of 1978, Shi Sangok left Korea, apparently unwillin to live there any longer despite the sp cial privileges he enjoyed by virtue of h position as Korea's foremost director. I Washington, Shin met with Chung, an they discussed producing films abo the Korean police state for theater an television. Sometimes Shin and Chur held their discussions at the Gourm Kingdom, a Korean nightclub in A lington. After one of their visits there, local pro-government Korean-languag newspaper reported that Shin Sango the noted director, had been seen in th company of certain unnamed antigo ernment agitators. Not long afterward Shin received word that his wife, an a tress, had disappeared from Hong Kor where she had been working on a movi

Chung says Shin was overcome wi grief and anxiety. "What can I d Chung," he asked. "I've lived with th woman for twenty-nine years, and don't know how to live without her. I got to find her."

"There's nothing you can do," Chur told him. "Don't go back."

From Washington, Shin went France to attend the Cannes film fes val. Chung says he got a postcard Sh sent from Cannes. That was in Marc "Then he just disappeared," sa Chung.

The night before Park Chung H was killed, Chung and I were sitting the Gourmet Kingdom, watching c ored lights play across the walls, li

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ening to the band play songs with words I didn't understand. In a few days Chung would turn 39. It is fifteen years since he has seen his parents. He has a son whom his parents have never met. Chung told me the story of Shin Jangok, which I hadn't heard before. When he finished the waitress brought another round.

Then Chung told me another story. It's not at all about politics, and I'm relating it here simply because I like it. And because when he told it his face broke into a grin and stayed that way the rest of the night.

It was back in San Francisco, and Chung had just arrived from Korea, speaking little English, knowing hardly anyone. Then one day, to his delight, he ran into an old friend from grammar-school days. Chung and his friend started spending a lot of time together, usually in a Chinese bar in Oakland, where his friend developed a fondness for the barmaid.

"And he was just about to get across," said Chung, his face reflecting the tantalizing imminence of the moment, "when the bartender stepped in. Apparently, his Chinese bartender liked the girl, too, and he told my friend to get out."

After a few words were exchanged, Chung's friend threw his glass at the bartender. It missed the bartender and crashed against the mirror behind the bar, knocking over a shelf of bottles. The bartender, whom Chung remembers as a very big man, came piling over the bar, and he and Chung's friend went after each other.

Naturally, Chung decided to assist his friend. He even managed to get the bartender in a headlock. However, when he did this, his friend jumped up and ran out the back door.

"And there I was," said Chung. "Me against fifteen Chinese." By the time the police arrived Chung had managed to retreat to a corner table, from the top of which he was defending himself by clubbing his attackers with a chair.

Chung recalls the moment when the policeman started to put the handcuffs on his wrists. "I said to myself, 'They can't do this to me.'" Chung gave the policeman an elbow to the stomach and knocked him down.

"And then it was all lights and sirens. Everywhere," said Chung. Four carfuls of Oakland's finest poured into the bar.

"That's when they got me," said Chung.

If the KCIA plans to do in my friend Chung, they'd better bring their lunch, as we say in this country. ❑

DISPATCH

CYNTHIA ARNSON

Cold War in the Caribbean

*IN HIS OCTOBER 1 TELE*vised address to the nation, President Carter cautioned against allowing the issue of Soviet troops in Cuba to provoke a "return to the Cold War." But the steps he announced—the establishment of the "full-time Caribbean Joint Task Force headquarters," expanded military maneuvers in the region, and increased surveillance of Cuba—threaten to make the Cold War the dominant theme in U.S. policy toward the Caribbean basin. Indeed, even before 1500 marines chased up the beaches at the naval base at Guantanamo in mid-October in a show of military muscle, administration officials and congressional hard-liners had begun to rail against supposed Cuban activism in Central America and the Caribbean as part of their assault on détente and Third World revolutionary groups.

Increasingly, this belligerent tone dominates official discussions of the hemisphere. The Sandinista triumph in Nicaragua, continuing turmoil in El Salvador, and unrest in the tiny island states of the Caribbean—these have all revived Washington's decades-old preoccupation with combating communism, which once again has focused on real or supposed Cuban involvement with leftist movements or governments. As usual, official frustrations about larger issues—in this case Cuban aid to liberation movements and leftist regimes in Africa and military competition with the Soviet Union—are being taken out on an area that the United States, through history or arrogance, has always considered its *mare nostrum*.

The rub for the Carter administration is the growth in the number of leftist governments that have come to power in the region in the last nine months. The coup in Grenada in March, leftist electoral triumphs in Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Kitts, and the Sandinista victory

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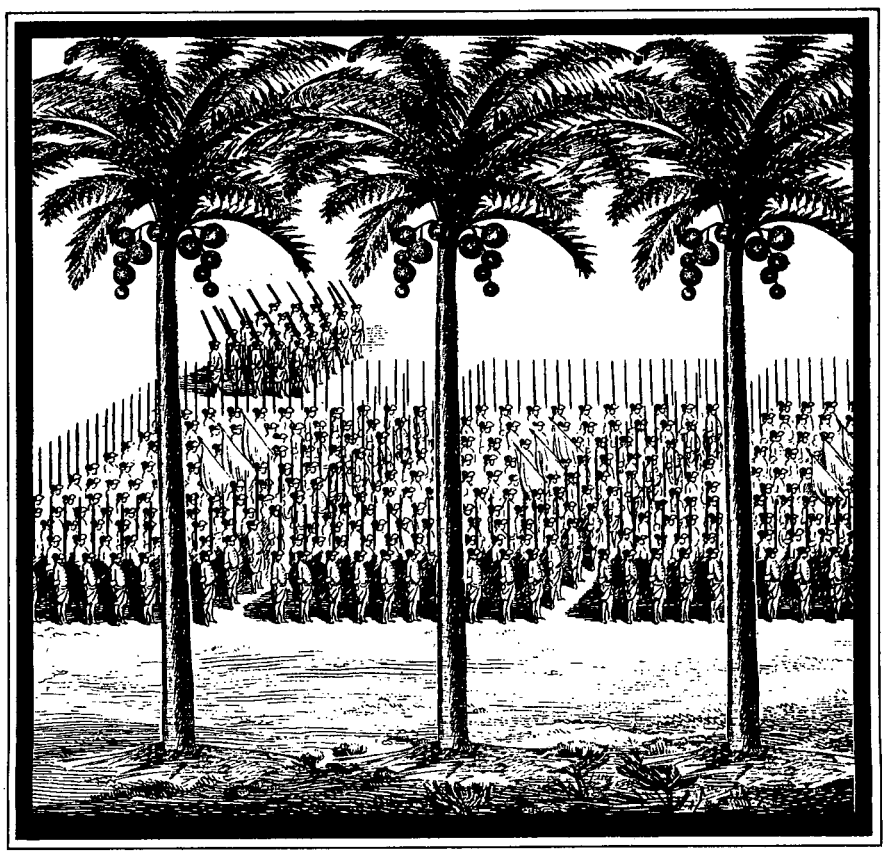

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in Nicaragua are viewed suspiciously because of the new opportunities they provide Cuba for influence in the region. Yet the administration is split over how to respond. Soft-liners, led by the Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, advocate increased economic aid that would, they say, remove some of the underlying causes of social upheaval. "We do not think that Cuba has a master plan for expanding its influence on the Caribbean," says Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John Bushnell, "but Cuba and the Soviet Union can see weaknesses and political instability in the region and they may consider that significant political and strategic gains are possible at little or no cost."

Others in the administration are less sanguine. Those in the National Security Council and Pentagon, obsessed with global security and what Carter calls "Soviet-Cuban military activism in the Third World," have attacked the President's self-imposed restraints on gunboat diplomacy and on military support for right-wing governments. These officials have succeeded in reducing human rights considerations in policymaking and have devised activist initiatives to achieve goals shared in many places in the administration: curbing Cuban influence, and preventing "communism" in the hemisphere.

In the proper circumstances, Washington might dust off the option of intervention.

A LOOK AT NICARAGUA illustrates the emerging stresses and strains in U.S. policy. In a dramatic about-face since early summer, the administration has sought to establish positive relations with the Sandinista government and has presented Congress with a request for substantial reconstruction aid. That this is a startling departure from the usual U.S. reaction should not be forgotten: Instead of sending in the marines or the CIA, the United States is now offering dollars. Yet the underlying motivations for this policy remain the same. With the left in Nicaragua contending for power, U.S. officials believe that the survival of "pluralism" depends on the pace of economic reconstruction.

"We recognize some elements of the present government in Nicaragua might prefer a closed Marxist society," Under Secretary of State Warren Christopher told a House committee recently. "We recognize as well that Cuba is already providing substantial advice and assistance. The moderate outcome that we seek will not come about if we walk away now. Precisely because others are assisting Nicaragua and may seek to exploit the situation there, I feel we must not turn our backs."

Nicaragua and the United States are enjoying a tentative honeymoon. Yet because U.S. policy aims at competing with the Cubans and preventing more radical sectors in Nicaragua from gaining an upper hand, relations could easily sour in the future.

Recent U.S. policy in Nicaragua should also be a reminder that, in the proper circumstances, Washington might again dust off the option of intervention. During the last months of the war to oust Somoza, when the Sandinistas demonstrated surprising military strength, official Washington began to run scared. Obsessed with the domestic political liability of "losing Nicaragua" and worried about the impact of a Sandinista triumph on neighboring Central American dictatorships, officials searched furiously for ways to prevent a Sandinista triumph. Yet given public distaste for Somoza, and the administration's own renunciation of direct intervention, military action was not an option—unless, of course, Washington could find a "missing ingredient" to justify a decisive U.S. response.

Thus began the search for Cuban involvement. It would not be an easy one, since earlier intelligence reports indicated that Fidel Castro was taking a low-key approach to aiding the Sandinistas for fear of provoking a confrontation with the United States. Nevertheless, in announcing the SALT treaty to Congress, President Carter expressed concern about "growing Cuban involvement in the problems of Central America and the Caribbean." Three days later, at a special meeting of the Organization of American States, Secretary Vance pointed his finger at "mounting evidence of Cuban involvement in Nicaragua," and called for the Inter-American peace force to intervene to stop the fighting. The proposal was a last-minute triumph for national-security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski; though the OAS rejected it, refusing to rubber stamp U.S. initiatives, the plan marked a revival of willingness on the part of the United States to back intervention in internal conflicts in the hemisphere.

In the heyday of U.S. interventions in Latin America, the use of gunboats was preceded by more conventional diplomacy. Thus it was no surprise, as war in Nicaragua raged, that President Carter called Philip Habib out of retirement. Habib, former under secretary of state for political affairs, visited Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, Antigua and St. Lucia during the summer to, in *Newsweek*'s words, "find a way to forestall future Cuban opportunism in the region."

Habib's report, still classified, is known to conclude that the area's "instability" could provide Cuba with "targets of opportunity." The report recommends increasing economic aid to the Caribbean above the fiscal 1980 level of $155 million. Hence, Carter's announcement that the establishment of the Caribbean task force would coincide with "increased economic assistance . . . further to insure the ability of troubled peoples to resist social turmoil and possible Communist domination."

Although some in the administration are content to compete with Cuba in terms of economic aid, others are reassessing military strategies. In the 1960s the economic programs of the Alliance for Progress coincided with increased support for Latin American military and police forces. Similarly today's soft-liners who emphasize aid have their opposite numbers in Washington's national-security establishment who take a harder line.

To these security managers, the Caribbean is a possible "chokepoint" in a "swing strategy" to get U.S. ships, aircraft, and troops in an emergency from the Pacific, through the Gulf of Mexico, to Western Europe. In addition to the strategic relationship of the Caribbean to the Panama Canal, the area is the source of two-thirds of the raw bauxite refined in the United States and the site where one-quarter of our oil imports are refined. But talk of the danger of Soviet or Cuban activity in the region focuses less on problems of defense

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against external military foes than on the security implications of internal challenges to unpopular governments.

IN JUNE, AT A HIGH-LEVEL White House meeting, the Pentagon, the CIA, and the National Security Council proposed resuming military aid to the right-wing governments in El Salvador and Guatemala. Both countries had in 1977 rejected U.S. assistance outright, in indignation over State Department criticism of their human rights records. But now U.S. military planners, disturbed by a vision of Central American dominoes tumbling after Somoza's fall, sought ways to shore up the dictators in those countries.

Once again, supposed Cuban intentions figured large in the debate. "The Cuban embassy in Nicaragua," said one high State Department official, "will provide a base for subversion." Congressional voices joined the chorus. "I have been informed," said Clarence Long, chairman of the House Foreign Operations Subcommittee, "that Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras are in fear of a Castro-Nicaraguan takeover. Is it possible that the 3000 combat troops that the Soviet Union has in Cuba are there to operate as a check against U.S. retaliation in case such a Cuban-Nicaraguan revolution spreads to these three countries?"

Although these proposals to resume military aid and arms sales were temporarily shunted aside in Washington, a change was not long in coming. Presidential Directive 52, drafted after Carter's speech on Soviet troops, outlines a Brzezinski-designed campaign to undermine Cuban influence in the Third World and publicize the threat to world stability of Soviet-Cuban activities. The document calls for increased sales of military equipment to Caribbean and Central American nations to enable the United States "to compete more effectively with Cuba" for influence. One notable beneficiary is likely to be El Salvador, where the recent coup by "moderate and modern sectors of the military," in the words of one State Department official, has the blessing of the U.S. government. So far, however, all of El Salvador's guerrilla groups and most of the peasant, student, and labor organizations have rejected the country's new leaders. Should these groups refuse to lay down their arms, the United States will be back in its old role of helping an unpopular government enforce its rule through repression.

While the United States has clearly taken the lead in responding to political unrest in Central America and the Caribbean, Great Britain has not abandoned its former colonial backwater. Last January Prime Minister James Callaghan met with leaders from the east Caribbean to discuss the formation of a Caribbean defense force. Barbados, St. Lucia, Antigua, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Kitts, and Montserrat initially endorsed the scheme whereby Britain would supply fast, deep-sea patrol boats and light surveillance aircraft, and would give military training to troops from the region. Although Britain is reluctant to play a direct role in defending the region, its support of the defense force is likely to lessen the anxiety of the more conservative rulers there.

The British plan, moreover, has apparently gained more support than a similar U.S. proposal this year to get Latin American states to join in peacekeeping operations around the globe. A Latin American unit was a topic of conversation at a hemispheric meeting of military commanders last February, and again at a series of seminars held by the Inter-American Defense College in March. Then, the State Department tried to sweeten the proposal with promises of special training funds in "international peacekeeping and arms control." Although Congress balked at the request for fiscal support, it was the Latin American countries themselves that were most reluctant to get involved in other people's wars.

Those countries have also been uncharacteristically balky about the establishment of the Caribbean task force. At the recent meeting of the OAS in La Paz, Bolivia, Venezuela's Foreign Minister José Ambrano Velasco described the build-up as "unfortunate" and "compromising the credibility of the United States" with respect to its protestations of noninterference. The heads of state of Jamaica, Guyana, Grenada, and St. Lucia had previously issued a more forceful condemnation of any "violation of the principles of non-interference and non-intervention."

The United States has begun to show a new sensitivity to pressures from certain Latin American states on energy issues, but the establishment of the Caribbean task force indicates continued U.S. assertiveness where matters of high politics are concerned. "The Soviet brigade is a manifestation of Moscow's dominance of Cuba," proclaimed Carter on October 1. "It raises the level of responsibility that the Soviet Union must take for escalating Cuban military activities abroad."

Labeling Cuba simply as a Soviet surrogate places U.S. Caribbean policy squarely in a Cold War framework. And in the current foreign-policy climate of Brzezinski-led confrontation with the Soviet Union, who knows what policy implications may be drawn from Cuba's practice of sending doctors and technicians to friendly Caribbean and Central American states.

Last March, when Grenada's new leaders requested Cuban military supplies to ward off a suspected invasion, the National Security Council considered putting a naval quarantine around the island. Later, Frank Ortiz, the new U.S. emissary, warned Prime Minister Maurice Bishop that the United States would "view with displeasure any tendency on the part of Grenada to develop closer ties with Cuba."

Since the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine, which warned against any European encroachment on the U.S. sphere of influence in Latin America, the United States has justified its own interventions as preventing the intervention by another foreign power. The policies designed to contain Cuba fit this pattern and will make the Caribbean basin a testing ground for U.S. power in the months and years to come. ❑

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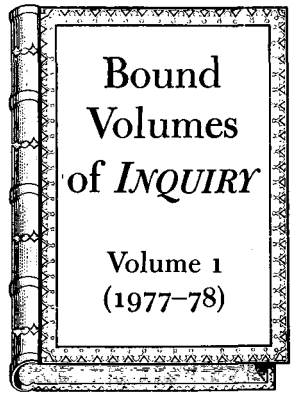

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POLITICS

DIANE DIVOKY

NOW in convention

THE WOMAN ON THE PLANE heading for Los Angeles in early October looked like a promoter's dream of a National Organization for Women member. She had the pretty, All-American looks of a TV-commercial model. A tall, slim woman in her mid-thirties, she wore a neat black pantsuit with a silver NOW button pinned to her lapel. She was quick to pull out snapshots of her two attractive sons and to talk about how wonderful they were.

She then explained that she had entered the women's movement early, about ten years ago, when she knew something wasn't right about her life. Women's studies courses at a local college gave her a whole new window on the world; her consciousness was raised, forever. She learned that just because she was a woman she wasn't personally accountable for the happiness of everyone in her life. She discovered she was quite capable of doing men's work—carpentering and plumbing and wiring—and that she liked doing it. She had learned not to be afraid of labels. Initially the very idea of radical feminism was scary for her, but "for a while I was quite radical myself," she said.

Her voice grew tentative: "Now, I've become more moderate, I guess you'd say. I work for NOW, but I don't talk about all of this to my men friends. Most of the men I know just don't understand." Her boyfriend, she said, had needled her about all the lesbians who would be at the convention, and warned her to stay away from them.

A decade after her consciousness had been raised and she had become a feminist, she still hadn't entered the job market, even though she had been divorced for quite a while and her children were in school full time. "My friends keep asking when I'm going to get started, but I just haven't gotten around to it," she said. Her feminism seemed a bit stalled, she suggested, and maybe this, her first NOW convention, would rekindle the old excitement, would move her to get on with it.

Everything about the women's movement seems stalled right now. The Equal Rights Amendment looks close to dead. Last year, three states away from ratification and up against the original deadline for gaining the approval of thirty-eight states, the women's lobby pulled off a congressional extension of the deadline until June 3, 1982.

"Three more states" is NOW's rallying cry, but there are no easy states left. Drives in Illinois—the only Northern, urban, unratified state—and border states have lost by slim margins, but they have lost.

Most of the recent action belongs to the stop-ERA forces. Before the extension was granted last year, three state legislatures had passed resolutions to rescind their ratification, a move of unclear legal status. After the extension, the anti-ERA people launched new rescission drives in another dozen states and one state, South Dakota, approved a resolution declaring its ratification "null and void."

IN ANOTHER COUNTERATTACK, Missouri, Louisiana, and Nevada filed suit against the NOW-sponsored boycott that has led a host of organizations to agree not to hold conventions in states that have not ratified. The boycott has taken up a good deal of NOW's time and energy, and has lost convention money for cities like Chicago and New Orleans. But it has not put the ERA any closer to ratification.

Meanwhile, the right to an abortion, which seemed guaranteed after the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, has been jarred by a massive political backlash. The pro-life movement continues to spread across the country and grow in strength. It takes credit for ousting Iowa's liberal senator Dick Clark last year and has now targeted twelve federal legislators—its "Dirty Dozen"—for defeat in 1980. It has joined with those who on pluralist grounds oppose federal support for abortions and succeeded in cutting back funding at the federal and state levels. A "Human Life Amendment," symbolically the counterpart to the ERA for the pro-lifers, is rumbling around in Congress, and fifteen states have passed calls for a convention to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban abortion. Pro-life demonstrations at abortion clinics these days are frequently turning into raids on the clinics, with violence likely.

If the women's movement is either fighting mad or in the doldrums these days, that was not apparent in October at the national NOW conference that is the organization's official policymaking meeting. It seemed more like business as usual for the nation's largest feminist group, and the biennial election of officers was the focus of much of that three-day meeting in Los Angeles.

The conference was held at the Bonaventure Hotel, a modern architectural wonder of glass and steel towers that more typically hosts corporate meetings and guests willing to pay $65 a night for a single room. Registration clerks, accustomed to business people who have their credit cards ready, seemed mildly amused and mildly annoyed by clumps of women, many wearing straw hats or clusters of political buttons or T-shirts emblazoned with slogans, fumbling their way through check-in.

Carl's Jr., the only fast-food restaurant in the hotel, did little business even though it was the only place to catch a low-cost snack; the conventioneers boycotted the restaurant because its owner funded antiabortion groups. One ballroom was set aside for "nonsexist" child care for youngsters who had come to the convention with their mothers. The toddlers and babies there seemed to be not so much in need of correct sexual politics as of a friendly spot in the vast, impersonal room. In the exhibition hall, Singer demonstrated sewing machines and a smaller company, electric vibrators (a "foreplay to love"); in one booth the military service recruited, as did the #1 Susan B. Anthony Coven of witches in another.

However offbeat the meeting may have looked ("Some of them do seem quite nice and well-groomed, in spite of the others," a Chicago matron, on vacation with her husband, confided to me) many veteran NOW members deplored the organization's new corporate tone

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What are we doing with a $3.5 million udget?" asked a Cleveland delegate. What the devil is NOW talking about vestments for? This is supposed to be a ass roots organization, not a corpora-on."

LIKE THE ENTIRE FEMINIST movement, NOW is growing and becoming a more professional peration. With 110,000 members the ganization has doubled in size in the st two years. It has five paid officers in Vashington, and a convention delegate stem that acts to limit representation the more radical activists.

"NOW has definitely changed its approach," said Aileen Hernandez, the roup's 1970–71 president. "As the feminist movement has become more ccepted and more broad-based, it has eant some compromises. Unfortuately, it has meant more structures, nd I'm not excited about structure."

Jo Freeman, a veteran NOW member nd author of a women's studies textook, noted that social-movement oranizations commonly grow more conrvative as they grow older. "In 1975, e slogan was 'Out of the Mainstream; nto the Revolution,'" she said. "Now it ems like it's 'Out of the Revolution; nto the Mainstream,' but we still lack e prestige. The real tragedy, I think, is at NOW has given up the role of the tting edge but not gotten respectabily in exchange." Freeman seemed to ave put her finger on what made the nference such a strange mix, with delgates uniformed in T-shirts and dunrees enjoying the plush surroundings. was a meeting with a press room for e large press corps on hand, but ocked with only two typewriters; a eeting of activists that had only two ours to deal with resolutions on issues, t spent two evenings on entertainment one for a disco dance. NOW's days of inging the word to the heathen are er; it has yet to make the adjustment om that heady time to the tricky work mobilizing its adherents for the long ul.

If anybody can take NOW through the ansition from revolutionary force to tablishment organization, it may be leanor Smeal, reelected at the conferce to a second two-year term as presint. Smeal can draw on rhetoric to rally e troops and excite them to a fever tch; in addition, Smeal, who only two ars ago was a Pennsylvania housewife, s grown into an intelligently organed executive—one who can keep NOW nning smoothly while managing a political coup like the ERA extension. And through it all, she is a good deal the stern Italian nun, a woman not to be taken in by nonsense or distracted from her cause.

If NOW's general membership has any sense of urgency about its causes, this urgency was scarcely evident at the conference workshops. There were no hard-nosed strategy sessions about how to undermine anti-ERA candidates in the 1980 elections or to present the cause of reproductive rights in the most palatable way possible. There were no political training sessions for the large number of new members who will be carrying the message of women's rights for the first time in the year ahead.

In a workshop entitled "Early Childhood Development" (the movement euphemism for child-care), leaders talked about picking up "long range support" for child care legislation, since their short range prospects look poor indeed. In a workshop on older women, a few participants talked about how the proprietary nursing home lobby blocks any moves in the legislature to deinstitutionalize care for the old and disabled, but their sad testimony did not suggest how this might be changed.

The sensational does sell—even at a women's meeting. It was standing room only at a workshop featuring a group working to end the portrayal in the media of violence against women. The group's slideshow of record-album covers showed women being chased, chained, bound, strung up by their wrists, and looking forward to being gang-banged, all in the guise of sex appeal. A boycott had teased a new policy in record album advertising out of Warner Communications, the speaker explained, although the company still used images of violence to sell paperback books.

THE BEST-ATTENDED AND palpably most spirited workshop—one theoretically off limits to the media—was on lesbian rights. There participants debated resolutions, argued strategy, upstaged one another, and were excited about the issue. Their goal was to have NOW sponsor a major lesbian-rights drive, a project later endorsed by the conference. Although the workshop brought together women who didn't look as if they had much in common—stereotypical fifty-five-year-old secretaries, clean-cut tomboys, dykish women, and carefully made-up women—the group had the cohesiveness of an angry minority.

The lesbians that the delegate's boyfriend had warned her about did indeed form a significant political force at the meeting. It was one of them, incumbent NOW vice-president Arlie Scott, who lost to a candidate running as part of Smeal's hand-picked slate. Scott's supporters

Smeal is a good deal the stern Italian nun, a woman not taken in by nonsense.

wore lavender scarves that announced, "No one tells me how to vote," and this style of campaigning tended to split the convention along straight-versus-lesbian lines. Women wearing "Dyke Patrol" T-shirts and holding hands in the elevator announced thereby that they insisted on a place in the movement, too.

On the other hand, nonwhite women were notably absent, and at the conclusion of the meeting Smeal announced that the recruiting of women from racial minorities will be a top priority of the organization in the coming year. She insisted that NOW's image as a white, middle-class organization was false. However, just a few days later, Hernandez, the only black to serve as NOW's president, urged black women to reject NOW as "racist" and called the new effort to recruit minority members tokenism at best. Unlike the lesbian women, who seem determined to stay part of the mainstream feminist movement, black women appear to have decided that their concerns are just too different from those on the NOW agenda. Many blacks contend that the prejudice they face is primarily because of race and only secondarily because of sex. Hence their most important political identity is as blacks.

Pope John Paul II's visit to the United Stated, coinciding with the NOW meeting, inadvertently united the conference and provided some of its most forceful moments. The previous week the pope had reiterated the church's traditional stand against all forms of artificial birth control and against women in the priesthood. At a press conference, Smeal took off after the pope as only one who has been raised a Catholic, who knows her

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father's house, can do. She charged that he is "absolutely out of touch" with the church's people, who believe in equality for women and who practice birth control, no matter what the hierarchy says. She said that many thousands of nuns want ordination, and that the church needs "an Amelia Earhart of the priesthood."

At a workshop on women and religion, women ranging from Baptists to conservative Jews talked about the discrimination they experienced in their own denominations, how in many churches "to be pro-ERA is to be anti-God." But again, the Catholics were the women of the hour. Some had demonstrated at the pope's appearances, carrying signs that said: "The oppression of women is a human rights issue," and "Sexism is a sin. Repent." Others had helped plan the protest fifty nuns would make at the pope's address the following day.

The most poignant show of conscience was that of the Mormons for the ERA.

PERHAPS THE MOST POIGNant show of conscience at the meeting was that of the Mormons for the ERA, a small band of women in a booth loaned them by the Unitarian-Universalists. The opposition of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the ERA is vociferous and well-organized, which is surprising because in recent history the Mormons have rarely been so overtly political. But on this issue Mormon leaders have called out their secret weapon, the women they usually keep at home, and brought in a professional lobbyist to train the faithful for action. The top leaders continue to deny their activist role in the anti-ERA drive, but if there is one single reason the ERA is in such trouble, it is the efficiency of the counterattack by the Mormons.

Some of the women at the Mormon booth wore name tags without names. They were not yet ready to "come out of the closet," they said. Some people knew they were pro-ERA, but their church didn't. It is difficult to understand how well-educated, middle-class women could fear to let anyone know they are for equal rights for women, but their anxiety was real indeed.

One of the Mormons with a name was Renee Rampton of Las Vegas, a mother of four and a grandmother. She was wearing pearls with her ERA T-shirt. Rampton said she had been moved to support the ERA by "the lies and deceit" in the church's one-sided presentation of the issue, by the exaggerations when church leaders prayed against the amendment on Sunday and church women cried from the pulpit over the idea of Mormon women supporting such a thing.

This was Nadine Hansen's first public participation in a feminist event; thirty-two years old, from Cupertino, California, she is the very model of a young Mormon mother. Hansen's life has been very neat up to now. A fifth-generation Mormon, she dropped out of Brigham Young after three semesters to marry and start a family. She has served as president of her area's Relief Society, the official church organization for its women; she is den mother of a Mormon-sponsored Cub Scout pack.

For a long time, Hansen said, she tried to find reasons to go along with the church position on the ERA. When she heard a California legislator who was a Mormon say that the ERA would legitimize homosexual marriages, she almost went back to the fold. But ultimately, she couldn't go along because "there were just too many erroneous statements in the arguments. It just didn't make sense."

HANSEN LOVES HER church and her way of life, and she tried to engage church elders in discussion on the subject. When she was refused an appointment recently by a church official visiting her area, she baked an apple pie, stuck a tiny American flag in it, and wrote these words in frosting: "Equality is as American as apple pie." He wrote to thank her for the pie and insisted he was not against equality for women; it was just that a constitutional amendment would undermine states' rights.

Hansen did not know that Southerners had used this very phrase to oppress blacks for many years. But she did feel frustrated enough to come to the NOW convention and, in her precise, mannerly way, to discuss the issue with those interested. But when she read a newspaper article about her own stanc she backed off. The ERA "has polarize people far more than it should have, she decided. "Maybe I'm not cut out t be a political person." Maybe on should leave well enough alone.

Hansen's life never will be quite s neat again now that she has detected th hypocrisy, when it comes to women, those in her religious community she ha respected. For many who thought a fe years ago that the idea of equality women would be easy to sell, the reje tion of the ERA will be a stunnin psychological blow. Perhaps NOW attempts to give its members a goo time in a fancy hotel, its willingness expend so much time on intramur elections, served to anticipate and softe that blow. But somehow, it would hav been more reassuring to see the organ zation looking a little hungrier.

In the final moments of the meetin Betty Friedan, one of NOW's founder warned the assembled not to suppo candidates in next year's elections wh do not provide guarantees to support th ERA and other women's issues. "We wi not forgive. We will not forget," she sai of politicians endorsed by NOW in th past who failed to keep their promises support ERA ratification after they wer elected.

"We were had by Carter," she tol reporters later. "We got words of pron ise from Carter, but we didn't get th muscle." On one trip to Salt Lake Ci last winter, Carter went right from gi ing an award to a local woman for h work in support of the ERA to a Mormo celebration where he starred in its pr family (but actually anti-ERA) progran NOW's experience with Carter and oth supposedly friendly public officials ha made them wary of campaign promise Smeal told reporters that NOW may—may not—endorse a Presidential cand date next year.

Feminists have been badly served b the politicians who claim to be the champions. They have been even le well served by the federal government its half-hearted attempts to end sex di crimination in schools and other publ institutions. After the flurry of interest women that accompanied Title IX an other token measures, the governme has relegated women's rights to th category of benign neglect.

Still, NOW members continue to s government as the mechanism for r form. Rejection of the ERA will, howeve force a change of course. Then wome will have to fight for equality of rights o their own.

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THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG, by Norman Mailer. Little, Brown, 1056 pp., $16.95.

Facing the music

JOHN GORDON

BEFORE SHE FOUND AND fell in love with the man who was to become the first American criminal to be executed in ten years, Nicole Barrett went to church and met the right guy for her. "He took good care of himself, worked hard, made love hard, and really liked her kids." Then one night, at his family's farm, she walked into the barn, caught him having carnal relations with a calf, and thought to herself the words that came most naturally: "You're going to be a loser forever. Face it."

The statement could be the epigraph for this bitter, brilliant, heart-stopping book. It traces the nine months from the day Gary Gilmore was released from the maximum security prison in Marion, Illinois, to the day he was shot, somewhat behind schedule, in the middle of Utah. It was typical that his execution should have been delayed by legal maneuvers. This meant that the watch he had broken at what he thought would be his final moment and sent to his girl friend Nicole became a testament to just one more fuck-up, and that the liquor and drugs given to him during his last night had enough time to wear off and leave him crashing. It also meant that he died very hungry, his last meal, a pizza, having been kept from him for some dumb reason and fed to the press. Way to go, Utah.

"Face it." *The Executioner's Song* moves across Gary Gilmore's world like a high-focus tensor lamp. Everyone in its range gets looked at closely, flat-on, and there is virtually no evil in any of them, just a sense of things missing, maybe brains, maybe balance, probably just luck. Everyone means well, and nothing works. Typical are the murders that send Gilmore to the firing squad: In the second one he backs the getaway vehicle into a concrete pole and accidentally shoots himself with the murder weapon. He kills his victims because, as far as it's possible to tell, he needs to meet a payment on an overpriced pickup truck and because he's upset about troubles with his girlfriend. No hate, no lurid heart of darkness. Nor is there any hatred when the cousin who helped him get out of prison on parole explains why she has turned him in: "You're probably going to be bent real out of shape with me. But, Gary, it had to stop. You commit a murder Monday, and commit a murder Tuesday. I wasn't waiting for Wednesday to roll around." All very reasonable. So is the prosecutor's decision—even if like me you're against capital punishment—to "go for death": "The only reason he was looking for the maximum sentence with Gilmore was risk. Gilmore alive was a risk to society." True enough. As for the men who make up the firing squad, somebody has to.

The Executioner's Song is in some ways a book about the American West, about dreams lost in the desert and the six-gun heritage and so forth, but the closest thing I have heard to a reason for the awful cruelty it shows was spoken by a fourteen-year-old New York City gang member. Asked by a reporter why he had killed several people, he answered, "I don't know—it just seemed like . . . there was nothing else to do." Murder, committed with guns that work better than anything else described in this book, is a good way of making things happen. Gilmore commits his murders with a certain inchoate yearning for the event, intoning "This is for me" on one shot and "This is for Nicole" on a second. These sentences sound as if they mean something, but they don't. Strictly Grade B. Then he goes and smashes up his truck and shoots up his hand.

But after his arrest Gilmore changed, as a result of circumstances and two instances of what the Norman Mailer of earlier books would have called existential acts. The first was the realization, indisputable by itself, that "I am one of those people that probably shouldn't exist." The second was that he would rather die than spend the rest of his life in prison. He was not, despite the press's "death wish" talk, out to commit suicide by proxy; in fact he tried a pathetic plan of escape on his last night. He just looked at the two alternatives before him and made a reasonable choice.

The result was dramatic. For more than a month, about three years ago, Gary Gilmore was one of the most famous men anywhere. The world press moved in and started sending out stories of a man with a "maniacal X-ray eye," a "hatred of bullshit," someone who "saw into the bottom of the pot." They respected him because he gave them the finger, and the conclusion seems unavoidable that they knew it was just what they deserved. At the heart of *The Executioner's Song* is a syllogism whose conclusion is left to the reader, the major and minor premises of which are: 1. If the expression "scum of the earth" means anything, it means Gary Gilmore; 2. Gary Gilmore in certain important ways was superior to the people who witnessed and reported his death.

These include: Larry Schiller, whose big coup before cornering the Gilmore market had been to sell a nude photograph of Marilyn Monroe to Hugh Hefner for $25,000, shortly after her death; Jimmy Breslin, the Son of Sam impresario, who offered $50,000 for a ticket to the execution; Geraldo Rivera, who commanded the ABC studios to put him on the air standing just outside the execution site: "Give me air. You'll be able to hear the shots. I promise. You'll be able to hear the shots"; Larry Flynt, who offered to pay for a *Hustler* "pictorial" featuring Gilmore's bereaved lover. And then there is the Ineffable himself, David Susskind, a comic figure comparable to Juliet's nurse, whose constant need to

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prove himself above and apart from the other weasels in the hole causes him to speak, to one of his own collaborators, some of the book's funniest dialogue: "You are a poseur and a liar and a flaky man. I think you're a very nasty person. Don't ever call me again, collect or otherwise."

For a time, Gilmore's manifest superiority to this lot made him seem grander or larger than most people, as a man surrounded by midgets looks like a giant. I remember, shortly before the execution, walking into a class of mine that was supposed to write an essay on *Antigone*, and finding that they all wanted to talk about Gary Gilmore instead. Then someone suggested—a happy thought—that Gilmore, really, was Antigone: he was willing to die and that drove everyone crazy; he could tell Creon to go to hell; he showed how rare a thing it was not to be a coward. He became for a time an authentic myth.

THE ENORMOUS VIRTUE OF The Executioner's Song is that it sustains that myth without faking anything. In its pages Gilmore is never not, face it, a wretch and a pest—the loudmouth kid in the movie theater who won't shut up with his smart remarks, the one you just want to kill. He seems to have been born with a very wide mean streak; damaged beyond repair from a life more than half spent in prison, and still suffering from Prolixin, a monstrous depressant that puffs out his body, numbs his mind, and gives him nightmares and headaches up until the day the system that administered it to him against his will shoots him. All the nice people who try to help him get hurt. What else is there but to get rid of him? It just seems like there's nothing else to do.

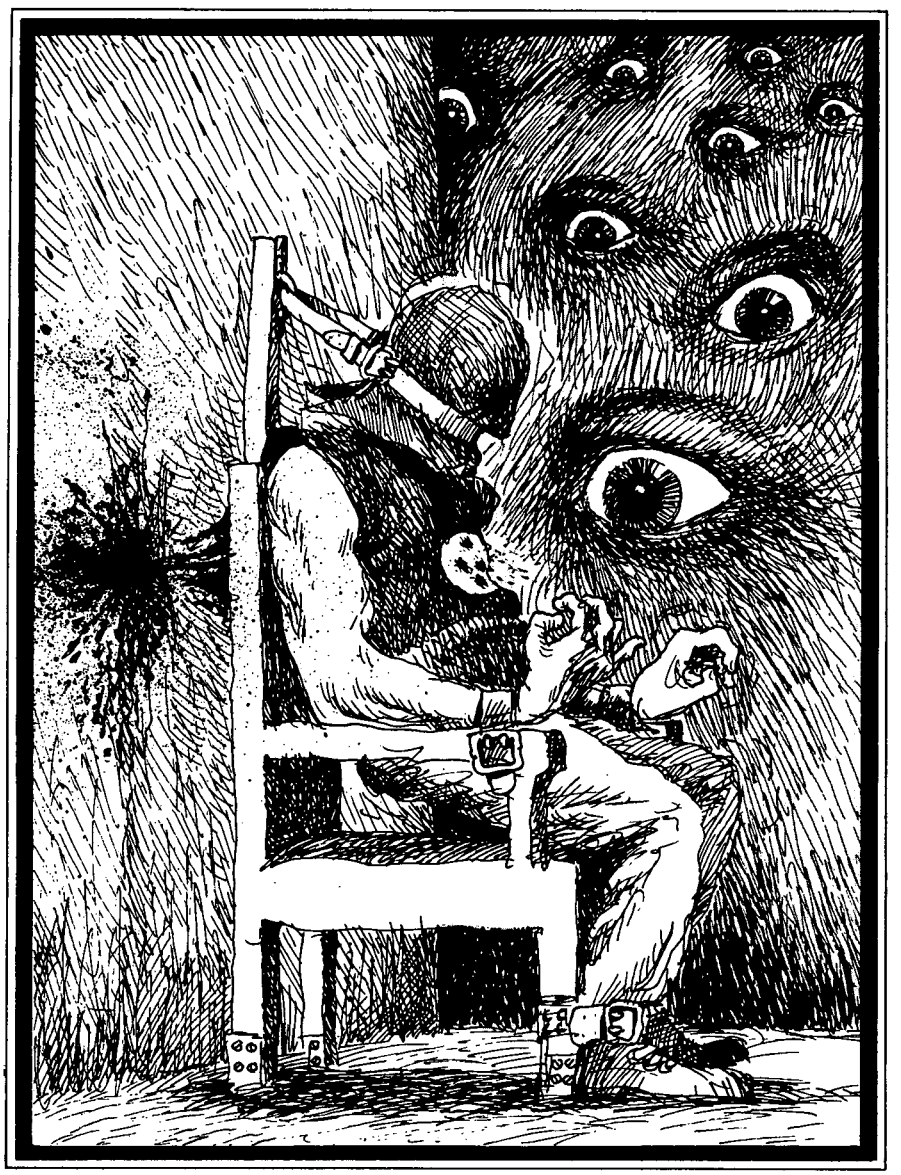
But *Antigone* is there too. In Norman Mailer's hands, the one decisive gesture of Gilmore's life brings the whole slovenly landscape of trailer parks and sanc into as sharp and poignant a focus as ha appeared in print since the publicatio of *Lolita*. *Lolita*, as Lionel Trilling point ed out, was a love story, acted out be tween a brat and a pervert, and so is a important part of *The Executioner's Song* love story, told in a series of obscene clumsy, pathetic, and unbearable letter between a man in prison and a woma in an insane asylum.

In case you didn't know, there is noth ing dramaturgic, nothing *King Lear*-ish or *Kubla Khan*-ish, about either of thes institutions. This is the asylum:

> It was shaped like a U, with the boys in on wing, the girls in the other, and a social roon connecting them. The halls were long an narrow, with bedrooms and cells, and brigh linoleum on the floor. Goddamned asshol paintings all over the place. Thoroughly stu pid stuff like COMMUNITY IS US! painted i pastel watercolors that had caked and gon dead. Orange couches, yellow walls and plas tic cafeteria chairs and tables. It depresse the hell out of her—like she was condemne to live in a visiting room forever. Everybod looked all tranked out. Everything so god damned cheerful and phony.

As for imprisonment, it is apparently th equivalent of being locked up for years i a bus station in the red-lined district of very crummy old city in upstate Nev York with all the toilets stopped up an cockroaches everywhere and the nois never ending. The inmates drink Prunc a watery do-it-yourself beer made out c bread. When you get out, they give yo shoes made of plastic to wear into th world.

Out of that setting and those charac ters, Norman Mailer has written th most moving book I have read in man years. It is over a thousand pages i length, and any book that long has to b very good to be any good at all. It is s good that I started reading it again afte I'd finished. It is better than *The Nake and the Dead* and *The Armies of the Night*. I marks at least the second time that Mail er has confounded the people wh thought he was through. This time he' done it by abandoning completely th trademarked baroque style of the las twenty years and writing a plain story i the plain talk of the people who live it That means that the man who writes th best metaphors around, as was once sai of him, has willfully confined himself t the language of people who say "empa thize" when they mean "sympathize." Remarkably, that language turns out t be supple and eloquent. The lives it dis closes, for all the crappiness that every where engulfs them, fall effortlessly int the patterns that have always mos



ERKKI ALANEN

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moved readers. It is as if our flashiest literary razzle-dazzler had become overnight the most careful of diamond-cutters.

It ought to be hard, from now on, to say anything definitively negative about Norman Mailer. One great book, and the nattering of the last ten years sounds silly. His personality has been redundantly exposed as not up to polite standards, but that has little more to do with his books than Jefferson's sex life has to do with the Declaration of Independence. He has been accused of being obsessed with violence, paranoid, and, shudder, antifeminist—but a twentieth-century author not obsessed with violence is a man in the middle of a hurricane not preoccupied with the weather; any post-Holocaust Jew who is not somewhat paranoid must be simply insensible; and as for the feminists, over the last decade they have produced more simple-minded and self-contradictory drivel than any comparable group of non-Marxist individuals in recent times, and we should all be grateful to Mailer for being the first to say so. What carries him through *The Executioner's Song*, missing the usual fireworks, is the simple virtue that has almost always made him worth reading at the least: He sees things, better than anyone else, right to the bottom of the pot. Of the dozen or so contemporary novels I have reviewed over the last several years and the dozens more that I have read, this is in its own class—the best book, period, by our best writer, period.

FROM REBELLION TO REVOLUTION: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World, by Eugene D. Genovese. Louisiana State University Press, 206 pp., $9.95.

Freedom road

ERIC FONER

IN THE PAST GENERATION, the most creative writing by American historians has concerned the South's "peculiar institution." Spurred by the explosion of the race issue into the forefront of national life, historians like Kenneth Stampp and Stanley Elkins, and, more recently, Edmund Morgan and Herbert Gutman, have reexamined virtually every aspect of the history of slavery, placing the institution at the center of American historical development.

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No writer has contributed more to this reevaluation than Eugene Genovese of the University of Rochester. In a remarkable series of works published over the past fifteen years, Genovese has sought to recast our understanding of the Old South while arguing that a Marxist class analysis can afford more insight into the history of slavery than the simple racial dichotomy employed by most historians as their primary tool of analysis.

No historian has contributed more to the study of slavery than has Eugene Genovese.

Genovese's first book, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (1965), borrowed the concept of ideological "hegemony" from the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci, to explain how a small planter elite dominated both white and black society in the Old South. Slavery, Genovese contended, served as the foundation of a way of life distinctive from, and increasingly at odds with, the emerging capitalism of the nineteenth-century North.

In *The World the Slaveholders Made* (1969), Genovese expanded his approach to compare slave societies elsewhere in the western hemisphere. Again employing his eclectic brand of Marxist analysis, he argued that differences among these societies—for instance in the United States and the West Indies—could best be understood by reference to the divergent historical development of their slaveholding classes.

Then, in the widely acclaimed *Roll Jordan Roll* (1974), Genovese turned his attention to the slaves. In his earlier works he had argued that "paternalism"—a relationship between masters and subordinates in which each class accepts a set of obligations toward the other—had defined southern slavery and set it apart from most other slave societies. Now, in richly evocative detail, he explored the culture, religion, and way of life of the slaves, arguing that they were able to transform the masters' paternalism into a shelter within which they forged a semiautonomous culture that shielded them from the most dehumanizing tendencies of the peculiar institution. At the same time, the slaves' "acceptance" of paternalism made it impossible to challenge the overall system.

From Rebellion to Revolution is Genovese's latest, and perhaps final, word on American slavery. A study of slave rebellions in the United States and elsewhere in the hemisphere, it reflects the very considerable strengths, as well as some of the weaknesses, of Genovese's earlier works: a vigorous writing style that makes for exciting reading but on occasion crosses the line into polemic; an acquaintance with a broad array of sources from the United States and other societies and an appreciation of how comparative analysis can illuminate American slavery; and a willingness, albeit sometimes on the basis of scanty evidence, to making sweeping generalizations and elaborate a lucid theoretical model. Like all of Genovese's works, his latest book is provocative, insightful, and likely to stimulate controversy.

It may appear odd that in the recent deluge of works about slavery, a subject as dramatic as slave rebellion has received remarkably little attention. The pioneers in the field—W.E.B. DuBois, Herbert Aptheker, and C.L.R. James—wrote forty years ago and more, and little has been added to their accounts of late. Aptheker, in *American Negro Slave Revolts* (1943), claimed to have uncovered evidence of some 250 revolts and conspiracies in this country's history. While criticized for equating evidence of white hysteria with indications of actual rebellion, Aptheker did present a mass of data on slave unrest that historians of slavery could not afford to ignore, although many, unfortunately, did so.

To an earlier generation of historians convinced of the docility of American slaves, slave rebellions were simply not worthy of investigation. But why have recent writers, many of whom empha-

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size the slaves' desire for freedom, tended to ignore them? One explanation may lie in the emphasis of recent works, which have stressed the cultural life and values of the slaves at the expense—like so many other recent explorations of social history—of political analysis of the system as a whole. One of the cardinal strengths of Genovese's writing has always been his recognition that slavery was first of all a political system, that is, the source of personal and class power. It was therefore inevitable that he would turn his attention to rebellions, the most striking political challenge to that power.

Another explanation for the relative neglect of slave rebellions is the fact that such uprisings were both more extensive and more frequent in the West Indies and Brazil than in the United States. Just as students of American radicalism are obsessed with the French and Russian revolutions, in comparison to which our own Revolution and radicalism appear so tame, too many historians of slavery seem embarrassed by the relative lack of rebellion on the part of American slaves.

The *problematique* for the study of slavery in this country has long revolved around the essentially fruitless question, "Why were there no slave rebellions in the United States?" Like the equally misleading question, "Why is there no socialism in America?" which has framed so many investigations of American radicalism, this problem is worthy of consideration at the end of one's inquiry, but is disastrous as a point of departure. It assumes that rebellion is a normal occurrence whose absence has to be explained, rather than a rare historical event. Historians who would not think of framing an investigation of modern politics around the absence of revolution in Chile, or South Africa, or some other country with a repressive regime, have devised all sorts of specious psychological and cultural explanations for what is seen as an unfortunate lack of militancy on the part of American slaves.

IN *FROM REBELLION TO Revolution*, Genovese very sensibly rejects this issue as a point of departure. The relative lack of rebellion in the United States, he contends, resulted not from some special psychological characteristic of American slaves, but from specific conditions that convinced them that revolt here would be fruitless. Elsewhere in the hemisphere, the high ratio of blacks to whites both in society as a whole and on individual plantations, together with the constant warfare among the colonizing European powers, opened the door to rebellion. Slaves there, Genovese writes, "could feel their strength; the slaves in the United States could not help but feel their weakness." As a result, their efforts at resistance came to center either on individual escape, or on building a community that enabled them to survive the experience of bondage without abandoning their sense of dignity.

Originally a series of lectures at Louisiana State University, *From Rebellion to Revolution* is a not a narrative history of slave revolts. Rather, it presents a theoretical discussion of the changing character of these revolts, and of their place in the development of Western politics. As in his earlier works, Genovese places slavery in the broad context of Western economic and political development. His title suggests his main thesis: that slave revolts, over time, were transformed from "restorationist" efforts to recreate African societies in the New World, to revolutionary assaults on the system of slavery itself. The turning point was the revolution in Haiti in the 1790s, in which the discontent of the slaves fused with currents of radical ideology unleashed by the age of revolution. After Haiti, all slave rebellions posed a direct ideological challenge to the system of bondage.

This thesis is certainly arresting, but whether it is sustained by the evidence is difficult to judge. Information about slave rebellions, both in this country and abroad, is notoriously scanty. Most of what we know comes from white sources, and these accounts are too often either hysterical, or censored from fear that accurate information might unsettle "loyal" slaves.

Certainly, Genovese does make a convincing case for a "restorationist" purpose among the numerous colonies of escaped slaves ("maroons") in the West Indies and Brazil. These communities sought, with considerable success, to recreate African cultural formations, even while they could not entirely escape the influence of the Euro-American world around them. The establishment of such settlements in the interior of Brazil and Guyana, the hills of Jamaica, and, to a lesser extent, the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia in North Carolina, demanded great courage. But as Genovese points out, their restorationist goal could easily lead to deals with colonial governments at the expense of those still in bondage. After establishing their own autonomy, Jamaica's maroons in the 1740s signed a treaty with the English authorities guaranteeing their own freedom while agreeing to return future runaways to the sugar plantations.

Genovese's account of the Haitian revolution rests on C. L. R. James's magnificent *Black Jacobins* (1938), which remains one of the finest explorations of any revolutionary process. Haiti had the first slave rebellion inspired by the ideas of the age of revolution, and Genovese observes that this shift in ideology reflected the growing importance among rebel leadership of créoles (slaves born in this hemisphere) and the eclipse of recently arrived Africans.

The ironies here are indeed striking. Créoles like Toussaint—and, in this country, Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vesey a few years later—were thorough-

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ly acculturated. Gabriel and Vesey were inspired by the ideals of the Declaration of Independence (as well as the example of Haiti), and Toussaint was culturally more French than African. An heir of the Enlightenment, he aimed to forge a modern black state on the French model, even maintaining plantation agriculture. But his followers were far less "modern," and his vision of "Europeanization" was shattered by their desire for small, individually owned plots of land. The experience of Haiti clearly demonstrates the role of modern ideology among the leaders of its rebellion, but it remains unclear how widely such ideas were shared by Toussaint's followers. The African heritage symbolized by voodoo may have been a more potent organizing tool than the rights of man.

In the United States, the paucity of evidence makes it impossible to judge just how applicable the restorationist-revolutionary dichotomy may be to the goals of Gabriel, Vesey, and other rebel leaders. The South Carolina revolt of 1739 seems to have had a restorationist content, but the aims of the New York conspiracy of 1712 remain obscure. Gabriel in Virginia in 1800 and Vesey in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1822 may have entertained revolutionary notions of overthrowing the system of slavery—certainly their language was marked by the ideology of the American Revolution—but it is equally plausible that they wanted simply to escape with their followers to Haiti.

Nat Turner, in 1831, as a messianic Christian prophet rather than an exponent of Enlightenment ideas, presents a different case: His rebellion bears more of a resemblance to medieval peasant uprisings with their millennial overtones, than to modern revolutions.

As Genovese observes, because of the superior military resources of the whites, virtually all slave rebellions were doomed to fail—which makes Toussaint's achievement all the more remarkable. Moreover, most rebellions were followed by reprisals against guilty and innocent alike that far exceeded in savagery any acts committed by the slaves. Nonetheless, the rebellions did play a crucial role in the emerging slave societies of the Western hemisphere. They were a standing warning to whites and a reaffirmation of the humanity and dignity of blacks. Whether or not future research confirms his overall thesis, Genovese deserves our thanks for rescuing slave rebellions from the obscurity to which less independent-minded historians have too often consigned them. ❑

WITH NO APOLOGIES: The Personal and Political Memoirs of United States Senator Barry M. Goldwater. William Morrow, 341 pp., $12.95.

Contradictions of a conservative

KARL HESS

BARRY GOLDWATER HAS been my best and most loving friend in thirty years of partisan political activity. Over those years, and in the years of fervidly anti-partisan politics that followed, I have come to disagree with just about half of everything he stands for. The same goes for this book, which is, in general, a pleasant but vulnerable review of the senator's life and career. His recollections of the family history are homespun and charming, he candidly refers to the major whorehouse that enhanced the family's Arizona fortunes, and engagingly describes his secret flying lessons, his department store apprenticeship, and the rest of a genuinely moving American family saga.

The political section is pretty much headlines revisited, with one bizarre exception: the account of the visit of a former atomic energy commissioner who came to him distraught at the discovery that a half-ton or more of fissionable material was missing. This was in 1968. The senator told him that he could not help in spurring an investigation because with his pronuclear stance in weaponry, "any inquiries I might make on this subject would probably be counterproductive." And that's it. The missing material remains a major lode of scandal, even though the alleged diversion of some to Israel by the CIA explains it partly. How Senator Goldwater, nuclear warrior or not, could resist probing more deeply is beyond me.

But aside from the recollections—which, although dear, are scarcely shattering or worth an apology anyway—there is at the core of the book a powerful demonstration of what can be seen as a root contradiction in the conservative position. Both halves of that contradiction are presented in this book so fully and so persistently as to make it a veritable textbook on the subject and, considering its source, a believable, uncontrived, and very sincere text at that.

The half that I abhor is the notion that the nation state and its leaders are the country itself—that, in the name of national security, liberty must be abandoned: "If the Republic is to survive, we must find and follow new leaders"; and, "To my mind the most destructive change flowing from the war in Vietnam has been the legitimization of public protest groups."

The half I agree with is the notion that free human beings can self-reliantly build and maintain their own society; that, in this country, the capacity to do so has been systematically and consciously vitiated by corporatist institutions and their managers, collaborating across party and positional lines of business and government: "We are the 'can do' people. We crossed the oceans; we climbed the mountains, forded the rivers, traveled the prairies to build on this continent a monument to human freedom. . . . We said governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. *We said the people are sovereign.*" (Emphasis added.)

A charitable view could be that Senator Goldwater simply fails to understand the difference between a sovereign people and a personal sovereign. But this latest book is too explicit for that. The senator understands the difference, and its subtleties, and opts for government—coming down as hard for it from his point of view as liberals like Hubert Humphrey once did from theirs.

In a passage in which he states that "I regard J. Edgar Hoover as a national hero," the senator says: "No one has been more vocal in defense of the individual's constitutional rights than I have. I believe just as strongly that the government and its intelligence agencies have a constitutional right to defend us against those who intend to destroy the government." In 1776 the British army held the same view. Americans did not respect it then. Why should they now? The senator may have an answer, but he does not give it here.

And, as though to underscore a subtle sense of priority, he recalls that "I said we should concentrate on enhancing personal liberty and freedom in the United States. And I said, above all else,

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'We must retain and increase our military superiority.'" That "above all else" theme of security first, freedom second, recurs throughout the book.

The draft is a striking example. Without even mentioning that his first campaign pledge in the 1964 Presidential campaign was to abolish the draft, he now lumps in draft resisters with the "young anarchists" who violently protested the war. In what seemed to him "a tragic reversal of traditional value judgments, the newspapers and the television lionized the perpetrators of this destructive action. Draft dodgers became heroes."

Goldwater's reverence was not so much for Nixon as for the Presidency itself.

Early in the book, however, he boasts that his beloved grand-uncle, the man who, along with his grandfather, founded the Goldwater fortune in Arizona, "fled from Poland to avoid conscription" in 1851. He also seems to have avoided conscription in the war between the states here. And the senator—properly, I think—sees him as a hero.

I have had personal experience with this selective suspension of skeptical sense and principle. Immediately after Goldwater's reelection to the Senate in 1968, I urged him to consider legislation to abolish the draft as his first act upon returning to Washington. He said that he wanted to wait and see what Dick Nixon wanted to do. I imprudently told him that I didn't think concern for Nixon was worthy of him. And we did not speak again until, one day, he chanced by while I was being arrested in a Senate corridor for protesting against the undeclared war in Vietnam.

What I had not understood was that his reverence wasn't so much for Nixon as for the Presidency itself. As he puts it, in connection with his bitter-end support of Nixon: "My concern was for the nation. My concern was for the Presidency, not the President. I knew that unless public confidence could be restored in the form and institutions of the Republic, our almost 200 years of effort to create the mechanisms to recognize and preserve the freedom of the individual would be jeopardized."

At another point he writes that "To sum it up, if I cannot believe my President, then I have lost all my faith in men and friends and in my leadership."

He even faults Richard Nixon "for not making greater use of the power of the White House to bring about the reforms he recognized as essential." In 1964 he campaigned against that very same power—against the imperial nature of the Presidency.

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP, as well as conscription, are needed, of course, to defend us against the encroaching Marxists. "Communism," the senator writes, "calls for a completely regulated, dictatorial society with all aspects of life compelled to conform to a master plan. This requires the elimination of all individual freedom, independent thought, personal choice. It is argued that beneficiaries of this highly efficient superstate society will, once they have learned to appreciate their improved lot, willingly trade off freedom, personal liberty, and personal choice in return for the bounties and protection and quality of the conditions newly offered."

But it turns out that there are haunting similarities between Marxist and state-corporate capitalist ideas. As Goldwater emphasizes, the Trilateral Commission and specifically Jimmy Carter's new International Stabilization Fund, deny "any importance" to "freedom—spiritual, political, economic," and, furthermore, intend "the creation of a worldwide economic power superior to the political governments of the nation states involved. They believe the abundant materialism they propose to create will overwhelm existing differences. As managers and creators of the system they will rule the future."

Wisely, Goldwater does not ascribe this goal only to the relatively new Trilateral Commission, but also ascribes it to the venerable Council on Foreign Relations, in which, he points out, all recent secretaries of state (except Jimmy Byrnes) have served, including John Foster Dulles, whom he sees as not only the best but altogether different. Yet somehow the senator does not bother to be bothered by the Trilateral connections of his more recently favorite secretary of state, Henry Kissinger.

The question of just who is in control of our political system raises nagging contradictions throughout the book. For instance, Goldwater takes pains to point out that the international banks he accuses of manipulating us "are actually owned and controlled by private interests." On many other pages he just as flatly ascribes our problems to government interference with private interests. At one point he states, "Excessive federal spending and federal borrowing consume great amounts of capital. The private sector suffers." But elsewhere he presents a more sophisticated view: "International bankers make money by extending credit to governments. The greater the debt of the political state, the larger the interest returned to the lender." He also notes that "The international bankers and the multinational corporations are the principal beneficiaries of American foreign aid."

Just who are the elite? He describes them as managers and owners from "the banking, commercial, political, and communications sectors." But it is a massive flaw in this book that at no point does Goldwater come to grips with one obvious extension of the interests of that elite: the arms industry. Dwight Eisenhower, regarded by some as the most obtuse politician of the twentieth century but regarded by Senator Goldwater as far better than that, left office warning against the domination of a supposedly free society by a "military-industrial complex." Senator Goldwater continues in office and in his writing simply to ignore that warning. Arms are good, and more arms are better, since lack of arms ultimately spells the doom of freedom.

If, as the senator's rhetoric insists, liberty is our cause, then any suggested infringement of it should be anathema. Conscription, of course, could not be contained in any conscience that also contained liberty as an ideal. Nor could Senator Goldwater's long beloved Central Arizona Project, in which the people at large are to be taxed to pay for water systems that would operate far below free-market price levels in order to benefit certain people in a certain state. Nor could secret diplomacy or secret assassination. Senator Goldwater in 1964 campaigned against diplomatic secrecy. He has also condemned the exposure of diplomatic secrets, as in the Pentagon Papers. It is not exactly the *conscience* of this conservative that is of concern, but the contradictions.

A final sad deficiency of this book is Goldwater's inability to understand one of the significant and hopeful developments in our society—that more and more very talented people are simply opting out of corporate life and for the

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more entrepreneurial, free-market life of what Senator Goldwater elsewhere has seen as the decadent counterculture. Very early in this book, for instance, he elevates the dress code to act as an index of civilization: "When dress respects no situation, we may be experiencing a decline in the prescriptive values that have preceded the fall of every great civilization in history." Conservative failure to see the free market in the counterculture is just another of the failures that is a part also of this book. The greater failure, of course, is to speak as if all business is a part of the free market and all Republican Presidents proponents of the free society. That would be a bitter thing to recall when, for instance, a President Reagan slaps us all with identity cards to help stabilize his war against some Marxist emirate or another. It would be particularly bitter for me, when Barry Goldwater asks for a restoration of his reserve commission to join that war. ❑

OUR DAY AND GENERATION: The Words of Edward M. Kennedy. Edited by Henry Steele Commager; Introduction by Archibald MacLeish. Simon & Schuster, 128 pp., $12.95.

Drowning in platitudes

STEPHEN CHAPMAN

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY once said he cursed the twentieth century for compelling him to give so much of his attention to politics. A more specific complaint of my own is that the last two decades have obliged me to think so much about people named Kennedy, and lately about one named Edward Moore Kennedy. As one of his first political opponents noted, if he were named Edward Moore he would merit no attention at all. He certainly has no intrinsically interesting qualities, either as a person or as a politician. Personally he differs in no important respects from the fraternity jocks we all knew in college, who owed any success of theirs more to daddy's position and indulgence than to any discernible talents. Politically he represents the last gasp of the Rooseveltian legacy: The failures of the New Deal, the New Frontier, and the Great Society have caused many liberal Democrats to question the old catechism, but Ted Kennedy has never had a second thought. Robert Sherrill of *The Nation* calls the philosophy espoused by the Kennedy brothers nothing more than "cold Roosevelt warmed superficially by the gravy of opportunism."

The only ingredient that spices this bland recipe is the fact that ten years ago Kennedy somehow killed a young woman in an auto accident and prevented the judicial agencies of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from discovering what actually happened that night. But even that would no longer be of much interest, except that the criminal not only got off more or less scot free but also stands a good chance of being the next President of the United States.

Chappaquiddick is also noteworthy because it has inspired some defenses of Kennedy that genuinely revive one's confidence in the durability of cynicism in American politics. Arthur Schlesinger, who has written two books nominating the senior Kennedy brothers for sainthood, recently wrote an article in *McCall's* making the case that Ted is an incomparably better person for having suffered through this tragedy. A few weeks ago James David Barber, a political scientist who has raised Kennedy sycophancy to the highest possible point of refinement, was interviewed by NBC News about the implications of Teddy's past sins for his Presidency. Barely concealing his contempt for the question, Barber curtly retorted that Teddy wouldn't be likely to confront similar circumstances in the White House, i.e., he would have no occasion to take a Spanish exam or to go for a midnight drive with an attractive young lady. By that measure, of course, child molesting wouldn't disqualify Teddy from occupying the nation's highest office, since presidents rarely have the time to hang around elementary school playgrounds.

It is people like Barber and Schlesinger, rather than Teddy himself, who make the prospect of another Kennedy Presidency truly alarming. Aside from his moral character, which is low even by the generous standards applied on Capitol Hill, Kennedy is only marginally more offensive than most of his rivals for the Presidency. But there is something about the magic of the Kennedys that makes many ordinarily intelligent people succumb to the most infantile sort of hero-worship. There is nothing inspiring in Teddy's character or record, but lots of people nonetheless tremble

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with excitement at the prospect of the restoration of Camelot.

One of them is Henry Steele Commager, a historian at Amherst College. It is Commager who will have to answer at Judgment Day for this awful book—awful even as campaign books go—since he chose and edited as many quotations from Teddy as could be squeezed in among the photographic tributes to America's Endless Diversity. To compound his sin, Commager has taken the superfluous step of paying obsequious tribute to Teddy in his preface. Would it occur to anyone but Commager that Ted Kennedy is "ever conscious that he is a successor to John Quincy Adams and Daniel Webster"? Or that the "whole of Mr. Kennedy's senatorial career might rightly be read as an extensive commentary on the preamble of our Constitution"? Or that he "is saying pretty much what that other Massachusetts man, Ralph Waldo Emerson, said over a century ago: 'Power can be generous,' and 'the very grandeur of the means which offer themselves to us should suggest grandeur in our own conduct'"?

Commager and MacLeish are like teen-age girls squealing at the sight of a rock star.

But Commager's idolatrous gushings only serve to warm the reader up for the incoherence of the foreword, which is written by Archibald MacLeish (I know what you're thinking; I too thought he was dead) and offers a supplement to Ezra Pound in demonstrating why poets should not comment on politics. ". . . To the senior Senator from Massachusetts, what affects life in America will sooner or later affect America itself unless those who are charged with responsibility for the conduct of government are prepared to act," intones MacLeish, his meaning charmingly obscure. "To act actively and not passively [how *does* one act passively?]. Imaginatively and not reluctantly." MacLeish waxes eloquent about the marvelous character and achievements of this Kennedy, and by the time he finishes he is almost beside himself with excitement: "It is the tradition of the old historic Senate that we hear now in this young, cool, eager voice." At times like these Commager and MacLeish sound like teen-age girls squealing at the sight of Leif Garrett or Andy Gibb.

THE REST OF THIS BOOK suggests an interesting progression in the letters of American politicians. At one time—in the days of John Quincy Adams and Daniel Webster—politicians actually wrote books. Later, less distinguished successors, like John Kennedy, turned the book-writing over to others (it was reportedly Theodore Sorensen who wrote Kennedy's Pulitzer Prize–winning *Profiles in Courage*). Then politicians began publishing books of random speeches, which of course also were written by someone else. To my knowledge this is the first book composed not even of speeches written by someone else, but merely of excerpts from speeches written by someone else, and excerpted by someone else again.

Thus it could hardly be expected to tread heavily on sensitive issues or to offer any coherent picture of Senator Kennedy's *Weltanschauung*. The excerpts chosen by Commager amount to so much wind, the only intent of which is to place Teddy on the side of the angels. The reader is treated to profundities like this: "Too often in recent years we have allowed debates on major issues to be polarized beyond the point of no return." (How often is too often?) And this: "I hope that between now and the bicentennial of 1987, people in towns and communities across the country will meet to discuss and search out ways of restoring the constitutional balance—to distribute authority and responsibility without sacrificing the rights of any of our fellow citizens." And this: "The struggle is for the conscience of America, for a government that is genuinely responsive to the people's need, for a policy that recognizes the true interests of the nation at home and overseas." Like most skilled politicians, Kennedy has a talent for saying nothing and making it sound like something. One can forgive the practice without seeing the need to have such nonsense immortalized between hard covers.

Occasionally Kennedy alludes to more concrete issues, and suffice to say that nothing in this book contradicts what MacLeish offers as highest praise: "He believes in government." That Kennedy does: he sees nearly every problem as the consequence of insufficiently vigorous state action (trucking and airline regulation seem to be the only two exceptions) and every solution in the expansion of state power. It is particularly amusing to read this usually shameless New Dealer but current Presidential candidate equivocating on Proposition 13: "Our job is to understand the meaning of Proposition 13 and to carry out its mandate wisely, so that it becomes an effective warning shot across the bow of government, and not a shot below the waterline of the American ship of state. We all are beginning to realize that our resources are limited, that government money cannot be spread without end across the range of problems."

There are those, of course, who have remained insensible to the history of the last half century, and for those Edward Kennedy is a suitable spokesman. Those who have less faith than Kennedy in the benevolence of state power, and less confidence than Commager and MacLeish in Kennedy's sheer wonderfulness, will have to look elsewhere.

THE MADWOMAN IN THE ATTIC: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination, by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar. Yale University Press, 719 pp., $25.00.

Boxed in

GEORGIA SMITH

*THE FREUDIAN INTERPRE*tation of a room as the subconscious symbol for a woman makes the image of a woman within a room into a kind of Chinese box, woman within woman within woman. But should there be an insurrection—should the woman within take it into her head that the outer symbol she has been given does not adequately represent her, that she wants another, that perhaps she would rather be represented by an open field—then she disorganizes convention and throws the metaphor into question.

In one possible dramatic instance of this symbolic dilemma, the woman is labeled "mad" and shut up in an attic room. The room plainly represents def-

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nitions she is locked into but which she loesn't fit. (Perhaps she must be locked nto them, in fact, *because* she doesn't fit, ınd cannot otherwise be constrained.) :n *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar take this sce-ıario as paradigmatic of the efforts of ıineteenth-century women writers to nake a place for women both as charac-:ers in their books, and as writers in a respected public tradition. The search, obviously, is for a room of one's own.

Gilbert and Gubar commence with a ıundred-page inspection of the very materials forming those walls that en-:lose women in literature: the historical-ly conventionalized images of women as they appear in books by men. This extended "meditation on pens and penises and kings and queens" draws on an awesome range of literary critics, poets, novelists, philosophers, and historians. Its conclusion is that literary creation, a predominantly male tradition, is defined by a "myth of literary paternity." An author (the word implies authority and denotes both a writer and a progenitor) "fathers" his writings, and also plays the part of paternal ancestor to later writers, his literary descendants. The metaphoric original is the divine Author, that blend of father and story-maker who, in the beginning, said the Word.

This theory of literary history leaves the woman as *writer* somewhat cut adrift, while it puts the woman as *character* in a well-defined place. The authors quote from Norman O. Brown: "Poetry, the creative act, the act of life, the archetypal sexual act. Sexuality is poetry. The lady is our creation, or Pygmalion's statue." Gilbert and Gubar find that women writers, literary orphans, "do not seem to 'fit' into any of those categories to which our literary historians have accustomed us. Indeed, to many critics and scholars, some of these literary women look like isolated eccentrics." The most fascinating, complex, and vastly ambitious goal of this book is to construct the sense of a tradition of women's literature, and to interpret that tradition in terms of its own characteristic patterns of plot and imagery.

The plots, of course, are those of the madwoman trying to get out of that attic. The stories told by the writers—Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, Emily Brontë, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Emily Dickinson are considered in detail—are, taken on one level at least, metaphorical representations of their own life stories. They are "works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning . . . simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards." Thus, within the pervasive imagery of mirrored parlors and sitting rooms and closets and coaches, Jane Austen conceals exemplary stories of life's confining possibilities. She appears to recommend that her plucky heroines curb themselves, be reasonable, marry the necessary husband, and live happily ever after. Yet her decorous plots and "happy endings" are consistently subverted by their own artificiality, and by a narrative voice that parodies the conventional.

Playing out more elaborate literary anxieties, Mary Shelley and Emily Brontë sit down to plot their escape from the unfriendly visions of themselves they find in Milton, whose prescription, "He for God only, she for God in him," crystallizes the life constraints against which they plotted. *Frankenstein* is mapped out by Gilbert and Gubar as a rereading of *Paradise Lost*, and *Wuthering Heights* as a violently revised gothic of Milton's cosmology. A tradition is established of women writers, haunted by their male precursors, expressing themselves in mysterious dramas and indecipherable (until you have the key) images.

AT THE HEART OF THIS tradition is Charlotte Brontë, whose madwoman in the attic of *Jane Eyre*'s gothic mansion sparked this discussion. Gilbert and Gubar interpret the madwoman as the reverse image, or double, of Jane. And from this one doubling, dozens more fan out in a maze of interrelated alternatives. In each of Charlotte Brontë's four novels, other characters seem to manifest possible roles for the heroine: possible expressions of herself as she could choose (or be forced) to be. The theme we are asked to notice (it has become obvious by now) is that the heroine, like the woman writer, starts out from zero, a motherless orphan (as the Brontës literally were) who must invent herself.

Gilbert and Gubar note: "We tend today to think of *Jane Eyre* as moral gothic . . . the archetypal scenario for all those mildly thrilling romantic encounters between a scowling Byronic hero (who owns a gloomy mansion) and a trembling heroine (who can't quite figure out the mansion's floor-plan)." Yet the book was recognized by contemporary critics as a primer of subversion. They were scandalized by its "refusal to accept the forms, customs, and standards of society." Elizabeth Rigby wrote in 1839, "The tone of mind and thought

which has fostered Chartism and rebellion is the same which has also written *Jane Eyre*." She condemned the heroine for stubborn pride—after all, "It pleased God to make her an orphan, friendless, penniless. . . ." But of course, it was precisely *not* the divine Author who made Jane Eyre an orphan, but Charlotte Brontë, standing in for Him and reconsidering His rules. If we have forgotten our origins so far that we no longer recognize a sophisticated feminist effort in *Jane Eyre*, then we're lucky to be so far down the road from her.

The metaphor of the "madwoman" indicates not only women writers' behavior, however, but also the psychoanalytical approach that Gilbert and Gubar take toward their subject. The "madwoman" attempts every ruse to get out of her enclosure, or to change the style of its furnishings, or to convince herself and others that, after all, she is not really trapped. (George Eliot "presents her/himself as so far above and beyond the ordinary classifications of our culture that s/he transcends gender distinctions.")

To examine such diverse methods of deception and disguise, Gilbert and Gubar choose the complex technique of literary psychohistory. They gradually develop their iconography of symbols, including excellent illustrations of the psycho-metaphoric uses to which these women writers put not only rooms and furnishings, but all manner of objects, from the golden hair of an angel/devil to the web of a spider/spinster and the "web" of a story as it is woven by an angel/devil woman disguised as a genderless narrator. They take their mythologies from every source their writers might have known—all of literature and western mythology—and they draw their interpretive apparatus out of the modern thoughts of everyone from Freud and Jung to Bruno Bettelheim, Simone de Beauvoir, and, inevitably, Harold Bloom, whose critical perspectives inform the entire volume.

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Such psychohistory is always a temptation to excess. By what privileged knowledge do these critics claim that Charlotte Brontë, who sometimes wrote with her eyes closed, concentrating on an inner vision, used "trance-writing" as a "simultaneous enactment and evasion of her own rebellious impulses"? How can they lay Ms. Brontë down on the couch, helpless, and make her support this conjecture:

> . . . Brontë may have seen herself as at best a creation of male "genius"—whether artwork or daughter is left deliberately vague—and therefore a being ultimately lacking in autonomy. Finding her ideas astonishingly close to those of an admired male (Byron, Satan, "Genius") and accustomed to assuming that male thought is the source of all female thinking just as Adam's rib is the source of Eve's body, she supposes that he has, as it were, invented her . . .

Such speculative arabesques may be unavoidable byproducts of a method that tries to map elusive motives so closely. This huge volume brings together all the books, letters, reviews, personal notes, diaries, medical complaints, remarks, reading lists, guest lists, laundry lists—every piece of evidence that might bear on the significance of what the women have written. The discussions are almost embarrassingly well documented, and if the critics occasionally wrap themselves too enthusiastically in their web of mythography while tracing a literary genealogy, one can only shrug and move on.

The final chapter carefully unfolds the thesis that Emily Dickinson took the metaphor of the madwoman into her own hands and "herself became a madwoman . . . both ironically a madwoman (a deliberate impersonation of a madwoman) and truly a madwoman (a helpless agoraphobic, trapped in a room in her father's house)." This chapter is a tour de force, applying the techniques developed earlier in the book to a final "reading" of Emily Dickinson's real life as "a kind of novel or narrative poem." Gilbert and Gubar make their case for Dickinson's madness (by their definitions) so rigorously, and with such provocative originality, that one never has the sense that they have overstepped. They successfully juxtapose the life and the poems in mutual illumination.

Dickinson wrote: "When I state myself, as the Representative of the Verse—it does not mean—me—but a supposed person." Gilbert and Gubar have written an encyclopedia of supposed persons, which should haunt the mansions of literary criticism for some time. ❑

RESTRICTING HANDGUNS—The Liberal Skeptics Speak Out, edited by Don B. Kates. North River Press (distributed by Caroline House Publishers, Box 161, Thornwood, NY 10594), 237 pp., $9.95 cloth, $6.95 paper.

Arms and the man

WILLIAM C. DOWLING

GUN CONTROL, IT IS SOMETIMES said, is the litmus test of contemporary liberalism, perhaps the last issue with the power to command liberal sympathies in the broad ethical sense. Other issues confuse us, turn out to be more tangled than we had thought, but gun control carries with it the grand virtue of moral simplicity. On the one side are ranged those decent souls—souls of decency, one might say—whose only desire is to rid society of violence and mayhem. On the other, red-eyed, glaring, lurking in the shadows, are their opponents, feverishly clutching their implements of loud destruction.

To see any important issue in these terms is, of course, to indulge a nostalgia for the world of fairy tales and comic strips, where the forces of good and evil are joined in unambiguous combat. Until very recently, however, the modern debate about gun control has been conducted in just such a fairy-tale atmosphere; if the mists of faeryland have begun at last to clear away, it is due not least to the arguments of Don B. Kates, a law professor and liberal of impeccable credentials, who insists that liberals have, all along, been terribly wrong about gun control.

In a series of articles appearing over the last few years in (given the issue) altogether unlikely places—among them *Harper's*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*—Kates has argued strenuously that the side of genuine liberalism, of a concern for freedom and decency and individual rights, is the side of uncompromising opposition to legislation aimed at restricting firearms. Much of his impact on the gun control controversy, I suspect, derives from a personal history that includes civil rights work in the South and years spent as a legal aid lawyer among the indigent. His opponents in debate—most notably liberal Representative Robert Drinan, S.J.—simply don't know what to make of him.

In *Restricting Handguns—The Liberal Skeptics Speak Out*, Kates is joined by a number of writers with similar backgrounds—among them the past American director of Amnesty International, a radical feminist, several lawyers active in ACLU causes—in a searching critique of the myths and distortions purveyed over the last fifty years by proponents of firearms legislation. The tone of the contributors, which emerges even amidst a steady marshaling of complicated data and statistical analyses, is one of barely disguised outrage; it is the tone of voices determined to inject sober realism into the debates of faeryland.

As a sustained presentation of its case, it must be said at once, the book is woefully uneven; it is messily punctuated with charts, graphs, and tables, repetitious in its use of evidence, badly written for long stretches—Kates is himself a competent stylist, and some of the prose on which he had to pass as editor of the volume must have brought a wince—

and otherwise bears the marks of hasty compilation. Yet it is also the single most important work to appear on the gun control issue so far, one that demands and rewards careful reading—or, I should say, rereading, since only a close study of its contents reveals how overwhelming is its case against any restriction of firearms ownership.

When one untangles the various arguments set forth in *Restricting Handguns* there emerge, I think, three main issues demanding the attention of anyone even remotely interested in the gun control debate. The first, which is treated unsatisfactorily by David B. Hardy in a short section on the Second Amendment, is the constitutional issue. Modern discussion of the intent of the Second Amendment revolves around a single case, *United States* v. *Miller* (1939), in which the Supreme Court adopted a collective rights interpretation of the amendment: roughly speaking, the view that its intent was to protect state mili-

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tias from federal disarmament, not to protect the individual citizen against government confiscation of his firearms.

The great problem with this interpretation, as various legal scholars and historians have long pointed out, is that it utterly ignores the legislative history of the Second Amendment. In the debates over ratification, what emerges again and again is that the founders, in speaking of a militia, envisioned a militia of the whole people, an armed citizenry of the sort the colonies drew on in the Revolution, a commonwealth in which the private ownership of firearms was simply and universally assumed. When James Madison congratulated the American people on "the advantage of being armed which the Americans possess over the people of almost every other nation," he was speaking for a generation that saw disarmament of private citizens as an open invitation to tyranny.

The vision of that generation is embodied in the language of the Second Amendment, which speaks not only of the right to bear but to *keep* arms, and against it stands a single Supreme Court decision reached on grounds of narrow expediency. The urgency of the constitutional issue today is that it is not more widely regarded as being urgent, that thoughtful and admirable people who would resist to the end any encroachment on the freedoms of speech or assembly do not consider the Second Amendment worthy of the same guardianship. It is a curious and unhappy state of affairs.

THE BOOK IS STRONGEST, I think, in explaining just how that state of affairs came about. The modern history of gun control begins in the South, where it represented an attempt to keep firearms out of the hands of blacks (members of the KKK and other whites who wanted to carry guns simply got themselves "deputized" by the local sheriff). Later, gun control laws were adopted in other states largely because of a widespread anxiety over immigration, and were directed mainly against Southern and Eastern European immigrants, Catholics generally—any new citizen, in fact, whom prevailing stereotypes declared to be violence-prone, feeble-minded, and probably anarchistic in political tendency.

Gun control became a cause of liberals, as Kates points out in a long historical essay, only with the failure of Prohibition—itself another gloriously misguided attempt to eliminate violent or antisocial behavior by outlawing something very often found in its proximate vicinity. The second large issue the book addresses—and here it does so effectively—revolves around what then ensued, a massive campaign mounted by a relatively small number of antigun liberals to convince the nation at large that firearms, dangerous to have around on any terms, were a cause of violent crime (and that laws prohibiting them would somehow miraculously succeed where the prohibition of liquor had failed). To a very large extent, at least among liber-

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als, the campaign was successful.

It would take a long essay to chronicle here the juggled statistics, biased cross-cultural comparisons, half-truths, and distortions promulgated by the antigun movement during the last forty or fifty years. There is, for instance, the contention that widespread gun ownership directly produces crime (though the homicide rate in Mexico, with strictly enforced gun control laws, is higher than in the United States, and in Switzerland, which leads the world in private possession of firearms, it is extremely low); that gun control works in this country (though New York, with its strict Sullivan Law, has a much higher rate of violent crime than do most states where gun ownership is high); that simply owning a gun is dangerous (for the vast majority of responsible citizens the risk of an accident is negligible—driving a car is in comparison suicidal); and so on. To scrutinize antigun propaganda closely is to wonder repeatedly at just what point half-truths become outright lies.

By far the greater portion of the book is devoted to demolishing the statistical or empirical evidence deployed by proponents of gun control—this is where one plods through endless charts and graphs—and the demolition is, so far as I can tell, complete. A reader neutral in the debate is likely to feel, at the end of the discussion, disburdened, much as a generation of parents has come to feel about the marijuana issue (did I ever *really* believe that smoking marijuana hooked you on heroin?). Even readers zealously antigun are, I suspect, going to find their convictions shaken; the case for gun control, if it is to be made at all, deserves to be made on more honorable grounds.

In the next few years more feminists may join the fight against gun control.

Kates and his contributors spend so much time demolishing the empirical case for firearms prohibition, in fact, that little room is left for a third issue at least equally important: the positive case to be made, in a state unwilling or unable to provide police protection, for the keeping and bearing of arms by a law-abiding citizenry both willing and able to protect itself against criminal violence. Yet it is obvious that just this positive vision animates every contributor to the collection, that all see the gun control issue as resolving into the much deeper issue of whether Americans are to be allowed to live free from the modern tyranny of quotidian terror, whether ordinary people must simply assume that it is their unwelcome duty to be murdered, mugged, robbed, and raped.

Such evidence as there is suggests that a high rate of private gun ownership acts as a powerful deterrent to crime. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, where I live and work, there was in 1974 a general police strike; in most cities this is the signal for widespread robbery and looting, but in Albuquerque, where storekeepers wore sidearms and armed homeowners patrolled the neighborhoods, the crime rate dropped to an all-time low. (It went up again when the police came back on duty.) In Orlando, Florida, in response to a drastic rise in the number of rapes, 6000 women went through a highly publicized handgun training program; in the following year rape dropped by 90 percent. Similar episodes in other cities tell the same story, suggesting that the hope of a citizenry able to protect itself from outrage is far from an idle one.

The one essay in the book wholly devoted to civilian self-defense is on women, handguns, and rape. It is impossible to read this chapter without a deep sense of outrage, not merely at the mindless viciousness of rapists but at the perversity of the "liberal" antigun spokesmen who have labored so mightily to convince women that it is hopeless, if not dangerous, to protect themselves from rape by owning and learning how to use a handgun. Here all the available evidence points eloquently to just the opposite conclusion: A woman who has not been brainwashed by a sexist cultural mythology into a dread of firearms stands, in a rape encounter, an extraordinarily high chance of escaping unraped and unharmed. This chapter draws heavily on rape studies undertaken by feminists, and it strongly suggests that in the next few years, growing numbers of feminists may be joining the fight against gun control.

There are signs, however, that the battle over gun control is waning, that the antigun forces have made their best effort and fallen well short of their goal of outright prohibition of firearms, and that the same people who give careful thought to other crucial issues are beginning to see through a half-century of propagandistic distortion to a reasoned repudiation of arguments that would, working outside the structure of change enjoined by the Constitution, silently repeal the right to keep arms. Should the tide at last be turning, much of the credit belongs to Don Kates.

BREAKING RANKS: A Political Memoir, by Norman Podhoretz. Harper & Row, 375 pp., $15.00.

The evil of banality

MURRAY N. ROTHBARD

*PERHAPS THE MOST RE*pellent character in Joseph Heller's hilarious novel, *Good as Gold*, is one Maxwell Lieberman, the editor of a small, pretentious, once liberal now neoconservative monthly, a man who eats greedily with both hands, a New York Jewish intellectual whose sole literary output is a series of autobiographies celebrating his own life and thought. I have no way of knowing what Norman Podhoretz's eating habits are. But Podhoretz is a New York Jewish intellectual, the longtime editor of the pretentious, once liberal now neoconservative monthly *Commentary*, and a man whose most visible literary output consists of autobiographical volumes celebrating his own career.

Podhoretz's first autobiography was the notorious *Making It*, with its title and content proudly proclaiming its author the intellectual's Sammy Glick, a man who pushed and elbowed his way upward from the ranks to what passes for fame and fortune. In *Breaking Ranks*, the latest installment of his self-anointment, Podhoretz hails his own high courage in abandoning liberalism in the early 1960s for a then fashionable radicalism, and later swinging back to his current neoconservative stance. Podhoretz and his publisher have indeed managed to redefine the concept of "courage," for which the publisher's blurb expects his

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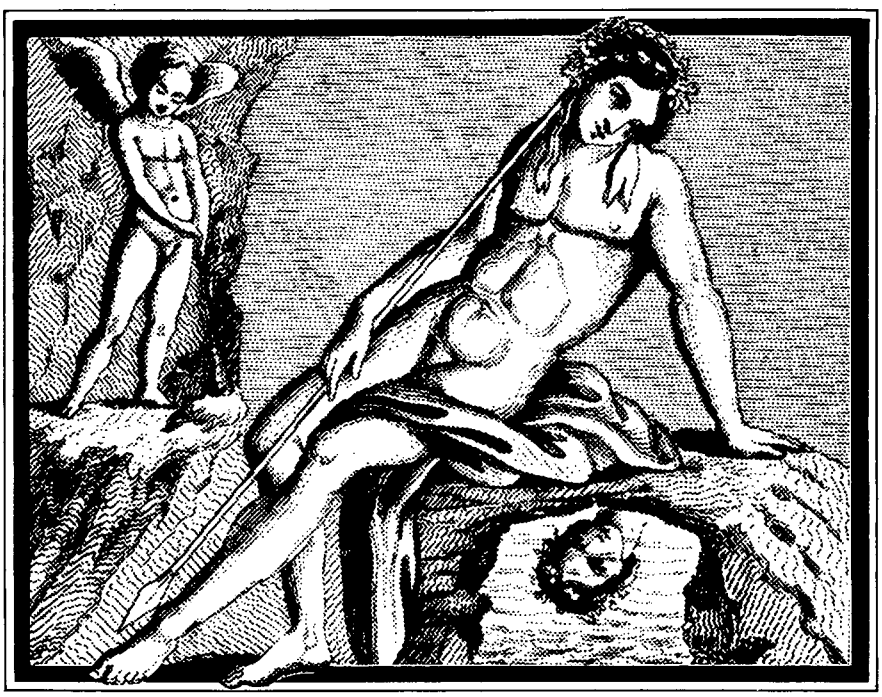
readers to be eternally grateful. Yeah. The high courage that it took our martyr to publish Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* in 1960, and then by 1970 to join with his neoconservative friends at the pinnacle of the New York literary and political establishment: to join with Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, with his associate editor Milton Himmelfarb, with Milton's sister Gertrude Himmelfarb Kristol, and with Milton's brother-in-law Irving Kristol, editor of the *Public Interest* and the man proudly proclaimed by his friends to be the "godfather" of the neoconservative movement.

But Podhoretz has not only redefined the concept of courage. By his very rise to preeminence in the intellectual world he has managed to change the meaning of the word "intellectual" as well. For, let us face it, this is a dumb book, a stupid book. In nearly four hundred pages of lowbrow blather, of plodding puffery, of idle humorless chitchat, and petty bickering and backbiting there is scarcely a single idea or expression of thought. Instead, we find out what parties Podhoretz went to and what parties he gave. And amidst the descriptions of the endless social round, a central purpose shines through: to show how many important people Podhoretz has known, how he has rubbed elbows with people he at least considers great. And to show, too, in various clumsy and unsubtle ways, how the greats didn't really measure up to him and to his standards, and how he personally contributed an important slice of whatever worthwhile things they managed to do. Altogether a sleazy, smarmy performance.

When Podhoretz does attempt to tackle an idea, the self-serving again takes over. An example is the way he handles the famous controversy between F. R. Leavis and C. P. Snow on literature as against technology:

> F. R. Leavis, with whom I had studied for three years at Cambridge and who had influenced my own thinking about literature more than anyone else, launched the most savage attack. . . . Snow, at the time a fairly close friend, grew bitter. . . . Certainly, as a student of literature at major universities both in America and England, I had emerged after seven years of intensive reading, largely under the guidance of those very two men, with an idea about the literary tradition very close to Snow's. . . . I remembered him [Leavis] wince in ostentatious distaste whenever the sound of an airplane or an automobile penetrated into his garden at Cambridge. . . .

One wonders if distaste at airplane noise in his garden really implies, as Podhoretz insists, that Leavis hated all of industrial civilization; one wonders,



even more, what Leavis or Snow thought of his alleged disciple.

Part of Podhoretz's self-proclaimed courage was his breaking with the radicals by the end of the 1960s. It was then that Podhoretz stood brave and tall against what he calls the radical "terror." But when he gets down to it, what he *means* by terror is, for instance, the fact that Norman Mailer—of course a great and good friend—after telling Podhoretz that he would write a favorable review of *Making It*, for *Partisan Review*, actually blasted the book. What are we to make of a man whose concept of "terror" is getting a bad write-up in *Partisan Review*? To Podhoretz, this shift in Mailer's attitude conclusively demonstrates the radical terror at work. Mailer's own explanation for his change of mind on rereading the book is brusquely dismissed; not even considered is the even more likely explanation that Mailer was simply being polite to Podhoretz in the first place.

To the extent that Podhoretz's ideological goals extend beyond his own navel, they rest fully and squarely in his own ethnic group. Explicitly and unabashedly, Podhoretz assumes ideological positions "on the basis of the old question 'Is it good for the Jews?'" Not for Podhoretz the older, broader, but presumably namby-pamby ideal of the intellectual as citizen of the world. And so, Podhoretz opposes affirmative action, not on the basis of justice, but because it would be bad for the (male) Jews. His foreign policy is grounded on an all-out and unmitigated support for the state of Israel, which he identifies with the cause of Jewry. A foreign policy of nonintervention is attacked, not on the basis of moral principle or even of American security, but because it "represented a direct threat to the security of Israel." Podhoretz seems not to have given a thought to the fact that *Breaking Ranks* is bad for the Jews. For what if American non-Jews, who are after all in the vast majority, begin to gauge foreign policy on the basis of the question: Is it good for the gentiles? By confirming the worst fears of anti-Zionists about American Jews' overriding loyalty to the state of Israel, *Breaking Ranks* can hardly fail to harm Podhoretz's own cause. But we do have the consolation that few people outside of his circle of back-stabbing friends will bother to read this book.

IN SHORT, WHAT PODHORETZ has plenty of is neither courage nor intellect but chutzpah. The chutzpah, for example, to talk about his "radical" phase in the 1960s, which consisted mainly of opposing the Vietnam War, not of course on moral grounds, but because we weren't going to win—it was "the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time." And the chutzpah to sneer at another of his great and good friends, the late Hannah Arendt, for being excessively pro-German and, by implication, just a bit anti-Semitic. It is characteristic of Podhoretz that in telling his tale of disagreement with Arendt he should say that the two of them, in a public debate, "spent most of our time on arcane philosophical questions."

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Sure. I personally would have gone a long way to hear this pretentious nerd instruct Hannah Arendt in the niceties of Husserl's philosophy of meaning.

One of the themes of the book is Podhoretz's attack on the narcissism of the New Left and of the current Me Decade, a "plague" that "attack[s] the vital organs of the entire species, preventing men from fathering children and women from mothering them." Of course it never occurs to him that this very book is an exercise in narcissism more blatant than anything his opponents have ever come up with. At one point it does dimly enter Podhoretz's brain that the politics that *he* is promoting—the avid pursuit of narrow self-interest by such groups as labor unions and Jews—may also be attacked as selfishness and narcissism. A crucial point, which cuts to the heart of the Podhoretz world outlook.

His reply is instructive: His credo is not "a politics of selfishness" because "it is [being] pursued in the context of a pluralistic society like our own." Not only is this a whopping non sequitur, since pluralism in this sense is precisely the institutionalization of selfish greed and grab, but the Me Decade people are of course also pursuing their goals in the context of the self-same pluralist society. And so we are left with Podhoretz, when he rises from mindless chitchat to attempts at lucubration, demolished by his own hand. Since his final chapter is an attempt to psychoanalyze his opponents as really being consumed with suicidal self-hatred, the quick destruction by Podhoretz of his own thesis could be considered high irony—although the point is of course lost on the author himself, who is far more a plodding boob than a tragic hero.

In fact, there is a still greater irony in the Podhoretz saga. He jabs at Arendt's concept of the "banality of evil," but his very own life demonstrates that Arendt was right. For Norman Podhoretz has not only fostered evil by his corrosion of true intellectual standards, his ethnic narcissism, and his promotion of the statist status quo; he also represents banality through and through. Were this a just society, Podhoretz would be spending his years as a writer for some AFL-CIO sheet, trotted out at union conventions as one of their resident intellectuals. As it is, we all have to put up with the continuing infliction of this schmendrick upon our consciousness, and we will have to begin to brace ourselves for the inevitable next installment of the living legend of Norman Podhoretz.

WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT: A Biography, Vol. I: 1767–1808, by Paul R. Sweet. Ohio State University Press, 307 pp., $18.50.

Prussian freedom fighter

MAURICE CRANSTON

*WILHELM VON HUM*boldt is one of the most paradoxical figures in the history of European culture. Professor Paul Sweet's new biography, the first to appear in English for over a hundred years, serves mainly to demonstrate that the contradictions in Humboldt's writings were matched by contradictions in his character. And yet somehow those very contradictions are part of Humboldt's importance as one of the creators of nineteenth-century sensibility—first of the German mind, then of the whole "Victorian" mentality that prevailed not only in the British empire, but also in America and indeed almost everywhere except in France.

Humboldt, born in Potsdam in 1767, was a liberal who helped to turn liberalism upside down. His best-known essay in political theory, *The Limits of State Action*, is a vigorous statement of the case for liberalism in the classical tradition of Locke. Freedom is seen as something that stands opposed to the constraints of the state. Government is regarded as a more or less regrettable necessity that has to exist to protect the nation from foreign enemies, to maintain security at home, and to arbitrate between conflicting claims to rights. Beyond these functions, it is held that the state should not intrude into the lives of citizens. Private agencies, not the state, should be entrusted with such matters as industry, commerce, education, social relief, and medical services. The state should be designed to prevent harm, not to do good.

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Having written this book, Humboldt spent the greater part of his life in the service of the Prussian state, notably designing an impressive system of state-controlled higher education for the kingdom, and in general furnishing the ideology of a bureaucratic system in which the high ideals of the military were made those of the civilian community. All this was presented to the world as a gospel of higher freedom: of freedom understood as each man doing what he ought to do as opposed to doing what he wants to do.

It was by introjecting this new conception of freedom into liberalism, and then intimating that the state, far from being the enemy of freedom, could become the instrument of freedom, that Humboldt gave German liberalism a new direction. Such thinking enabled German liberalism to join forces with Prussian imperialism against conservativism to promote the institution of a united German national state. The mainstream of German liberal thought was henceforth, at least until the end of World War I, embodied in the "national liberal" movement. The "classical liberal" ideas of *The Limits of State Action*—a book that Humboldt left unpublished in his lifetime—were kept alive on the fringe of German liberalism by such groups as the *Fortschrittler* and the *Freisinnigen*. In the meantime, Humboldt's earlier ideas were taken up by such writers as John Stuart Mill, so that when classical liberalism was revived in Germany after 1918 and again after 1945, it had a somewhat alien character; Germany's newest liberals can invoke the name of Humboldt, but the substance of their liberal program derives from British and American experience more than it does from Humboldt's theories.

Even so, it would be a mistake to think of Humboldt as important only in the sphere of politics. In philosophy, and in cultural history generally, he mediates in a significant manner between the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and nineteenth-century romanticism, between Kant and Hegel, between an aristocratic past and a bourgeois future. Ralf Dahrendorf has observed that the Prussian nobility did not open out, like the British aristocracy, toward the middle class to adopt many of their values; it recruited new noblemen as an army seeks commissioned officers, and required them to conform, and moreover to conform willingly. Since Humboldt forged the marriage of nineteenth-century Prussian *étatisme* with liberalism, the willingness of conformity was something he, more than others, stressed.

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He was a man of very delicate sensibility—*Sinnlichkeit* is a word that recurs in many of his writings; a man also of deep culture—*Bildung* is another favorite word. He was also exceptionally intelligent. He not only read a lot of poetry; he spent a great deal of time analyzing his own feelings and emotions, and was commendably honest in his effort to understand himself. And yet there was a coarse side to his nature that prompted even Talleyrand, usually as tolerant as he was unscrupulous, to consider Humboldt a highly offensive individual.

Humboldt made no secret—and neither does his present biographer—of the fact that he was a constant client of prostitutes. He seems never to have enjoyed, in the upper-class eighteenth-century manner, affairs with women of his own rank and adventures with decent working girls; it had to be prostitutes. Moreover, we can tell from his records of sums paid to these girls (and the fact that he noted down such figures in his journal is itself revealing), that he must have used only the lowest type of whore. It is almost certainly this kind of thing (which Talleyrand, with his spy network, would have known all about) that earned Humboldt his bad reputation during the four years he spent in Paris.

Wilhelm von Humboldt was a liberal who helped to turn liberalism upside down.

Even so, Humboldt was a happy man at home. Yet here again, in the contradiction between elevated love for his wife and children, and his exquisite feelings of friendship on the one hand and his cheap traffic with whores on the other, we can see in Humboldt a personality that was to repeat itself throughout the nineteenth century—the Jekyll and Hyde character is not exceptional, it is typical—and as decent girls became more tenaciously virginal and wives became more and more faithful under the influence of Humboldt's type of idealism, the kind of prostitution he patronized became more widespread.

When the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars alienated the rest of the world from French cultural values, from Cartesianism and the Enlightenment as much as from Robespierre and republicanism, German thought assumed an entirely new dimension: It captured the leadership the French had lost. In this exercise Humboldt played a crucial part, and he was able to do so because he had made a thorough study of French thought, detecting, like a strategist, its weakness, and promoting a German system of ideas as a consciously designed alternative.

DURING HIS YEARS IN Paris, at the time of the Directory, he made the acquaintance of Napoleon. Humboldt felt none of the usual aristocrat's aversion toward that upstart; he describes him in his journal sympathetically, and notices (as I have never seen noticed by others) how badly Napoleon was treated by the intellectuals in Paris with whom he tried to make friends and even to establish himself as one of them. Nor did Humboldt find the kind of police rule that obtained under the Directory uncongenial. It was against the *idéologues*, the group gathered around Destutt de Tracy, that Humboldt chose to exercise his wits. Here he observed that several characteristic features of French thought were most conspicuously evident, among them belief in universal rules, in logic and system, in clear and distinct ideas, and generally in the supremacy of the rational mind over the vague intimations of human feelings.

Humboldt challenged every one of those principles. He became the champion of particular, changing, and diverse customs against set universal principles; of the random consequence of nature as against the systematic ordering of logic; of inward understanding as opposed to the publicly demonstrable proof; in a word, of the soul as opposed to reason.

There was nothing very new in all this. The exaltation of the human soul as opposed to the human reason was central to the pietism that had been strong in Germany for several generations. Pietism was a Protestant heresy that meant nothing in a country like France, divided as it was between Catholics and unbelievers. Pietism reached France only in the very indirect form that Rousseau acquired through François Magny and Madame de Warens—and in Rousseau it was seen as a sign of madness. The novelty of Humboldt's position was that it separated the soul from its basis in religion, and gave the soul, in effect, an independent metaphysical existence of its own. Humboldt did not personally effect this separation, for that had already been done by the German eighteenth-century enlightment, but he did exploit its ideological potentialities.

The French themselves, in the vulgar triumph of Napoleon, abandoned rationalism for the cult of the hero. But the French did not understand the metaphysics of heroism. They could not really fathom, as the Germans could, the depths of the human soul; their thinking (as Humboldt rightly recognized) was restricted by the very language they spoke. French had become the rigid language of rationalism, and it could not change. Metaphysics needed another tongue, and German, a hitherto neglected language, was there, ready to be put to that purpose. English, of course, was no use—it was too old, too used in the service of commonsense and down-to-earth empiricism to be of service to a new idealism. The opportunity for German was equally the opportunity for Germany, and Humboldt seized it.

Humboldt was not a philosopher like Kant or Hegel: He was a moralist, or ideologue whose aim was practical rather than theoretical. Logically, he was to have his most lasting monument not in books, but in institutions: the reformed Prussian universities and academies of which he was, as a functionary of the kingdom, the principal architect. And of course the Prussian model inspired not only German, but almost all Western conceptions of the ideal university. Arguably, the contradictions within that model were never suspected until the actual German institutions proved so suited to the purposes of the Third Reich, and are still not fully seen.

They are also the contradictions of Humboldt the man; the contradictions of one who was at once bourgeois and aristocratic, who believed in proud freedom and servile obedience, in the values of the battlefield and those of tranquil domesticity, in an institution dedicated to this world and the world beyond, assigning priority both to the carnal and the spiritual, to truth and to utility, to equality and to hierarchy, to man and to God—but it was all done behind a façade of such imposing splendor that no one at the time could doubt that by some miracle of the dialectic Humboldt had reconciled the irreconcilable in his work, as in his life. ❑

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FILM

New York Film Festival II

STEPHEN HARVEY

TIME WAS, NOT SO VERY long ago, when the cosmopolites who annually flocked to the New York Film Festival did so in the fervent hope of being outraged by some obscure object of derision assailing them from the screen. In those days, a perverse part of the fun of attending lay in the prospect of witnessing some unheralded experimentalist diddle with narrative form in some new and inchoate manner, preferably while thrashing about in the shoals of sexual pathology.

Alas, that time is seemingly past. To be sure, the festival committee has tried to keep its end up in recent years with the likes of *In the Realm of the Senses* and *Salò*, but for the most part the audience is pretty shockproof nowadays. After all, many of the opaque gimmicks of yore have become the movie vernacular of the present, and those that haven't can be dismissed as the quaint clichés of a bygone movie time. Moreover, it's almost impossible to come up with a really scabrous subject anymore—most of the mild waves stirred up by *Luna* were ripples of mirth at its silliness, rather than horror at Bertolucci's presumed daring—incest or no incest. In any case, the regulars have had lots of time to get used to the festival's former *enfants terribles*: By now they know what to expect from the likes of Fassbinder et al. even before the lights dim.

This year there's been a preponderance of films from *Mitteleuropa*, with divergent approaches to the medium dividing neatly along geographical-political lines. Films from the East (specifically Hungary and Poland) are rather despairingly humanistic, and seek to grasp the audience's attention in traditional ways—involving us with a realistic, detailed plot and engaging our feelings for the characters. The West German entries by Fassbinder and Herzog, on the other hand, are glacially nihilistic, consciously setting up one barrier after another to keep the viewer from having any emotional identification with what's occurring on screen.

The Hungarian ***Angi Vera*** turned out to be one of the festival's most pungent surprises, coming as it did from a director, Pál Gábor, who was an unknown here. The title character, played by Veronika Papp, is an orphaned peasant girl coming of age at the dawn of the Communist era in 1948. Ostentatiously humble yet evidently eager to take part in the socialist tomorrow, Vera manages to win a coveted spot in a school that is supposed to mold the proletarian leaders of the future. From the outset, Vera shows a preternatural gift for making each politically correct move through the maze of Stalinist cant. She befriends a humorless informer with good Party connections, seemingly out of pity for the woman's isolation from her less dogmatic barrackmates. Vera then spurns the attentions of a handsome, unlettered coalminer in preference for her anemic young instructor in Marxism—only to publicly confess the liaison during the day of mass "self-criticism" that climaxes the school term, carefully blaming herself for her lapse (an obvious badge of sincerity). Said tutor suddenly disappears from sight, Vera is graduated with honors, and soon she is comfortably ensconced in the back of a sedan heading for Budapest and a cushy job in journalism; on the road alongside, one of her outspoken classmates with a true revolutionary past eats dust as she struggles with a rickety prewar bicyle.

What makes *Angi Vera* so intriguing is that you're never sure whether Vera's progress is due to coolheaded calculation or dumb luck. Veronika Papp adroitly makes her a creature of wistful glances and ethereal sighs; Vera's ingenuous smile baffles both the viewer and her comrades on screen. Gábor's presentation unstintingly records a system that exalted the mediocre while condemning the just for their alleged deviationist sins, yet the mood of this multilayered film is anything but harsh and didactic. With its hushed voices and amber-lit interiors, *Angi Vera* offers a succession of subtly telling moments that merge to create a chilling panorama of corruption.

THE EVER-PROLIFIC RAINER Maria Fassbinder was represented by two films this year. (One festival committee member informed me, no irony intended, that these were Fassbinder's best efforts *so far* in 1979.) ***The Marriage of Maria Braun***, the more generally accessible of the two, could be seen as a kind of capitalist companion piece to *Angi Vera*. Its heroine likewise manages to prevail despite postwar upheaval, but the glint of ambition is ever apparent in Maria's amoral gaze. A conventional working-class Berliner, Maria (Hanna Schygulla) weds her soldier sweetheart Hermann while the world is literally falling down around them. With her husband missing and presumed dead on the eastern front, Maria blithely gains employment after the war at an off-limits dive frequented by the American army of occupation; here she attracts the eye of a homely but sincere black G.I. named Bill. Fond though she is of him (not to mention all those goodies from the PX), once Hermann unexpectedly turns up Maria doesn't hesitate for a second to unload Bill by whatever extreme means are necessary. Hermann takes the rap for Bill's murder, and Maria proceeds to cast her net over a repatriated industrialist whose occasional bedmate and right-hand executive she becomes. Maria grasps her share of the economic miracle of the 1950s, storing up her resources for the day of her reunion with the one man to whom she had ever really submitted her will. Yet the fate that had raised her to prominence is capricious indeed, and Maria must make her own postwar reparations at the film's (literally) explosive denouement.

Fassbinder clearly wants *Maria Braun* in general and its protagonist in particular to carry a hefty symbolic weight, not just as metaphors for the survival instinct, but for the fatal taint of materialism as well. Growing more self-absorbed at each stage in her ascent to bourgeois status, Maria is literally sickened and deranged by her exposure to affluence—before long, she's throwing up in chic restaurants, laughing to herself hysteri-

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:ally, and lashing out nastily at her eco-
nomic inferiors. As Schygulla's superla-
ively ironic performance makes plain,
Maria's utter candor as to her motives is
ner saving grace; the character's in-
domitable resolve always shines through
hose fleshy, baby-doll contours of the
actress's face.

As usual with Fassbinder, his sense of detachment is paramount. He keeps you at a veritable arm's length from the world of his heroine: Scene after scene frames the actors at an extreme distance from the camera, lest otherwise the viewer be tempted to empathize with the characters. Sequences that in other hands might build to emotional catharsis are here stylized into ritual—Maria strolls to join her black suitor for their first dance, and the cafe's other patrons, mute and frozen, watch them entwine; one brisk thump on the noggin some reels later, and in a trice Bill is a candidate for posthumous honors. Throughout Fassbinder shows a rather self-conscious bent for the emblematic. His notion of wickedness is a bit droll and childlike—you know that Maria's really lost her once-sturdy bearings when she starts cavorting around her surburban villa in scanties, even when well-starched company calls.

Her final comeuppance could scarcely be more arbitrary from the point of view of the plot—yet the fact that this is clearly intentional doesn't render it any more acceptable. Fassbinder's penchant for peremptorily polishing off his characters is a thread linking many of his movies; to me it suggests a kind of generalized contempt far beyond his specific disdain for the mortal lapses of his protagonists. In the end, there's something more decadent about Fassbinder's own misanthropy than there is in the morally bankrupt world he keeps exhuming.

IN THE YEAR OF THIRTEEN ***Moons*** is Fassbinder at his most willfully perverse, a work for the delectation of his hard-core aficionados alone. This is another of his bile-etched portraits of the sexually extreme, recording the last paroxysms of a petulantly self-destructive transsexual named Elvira (Volker Spengler) who never should have gone to Casablanca for that operation in the first place. After an ill-fated night of would-be debauchery, Elvira slides down the path of self-annihilation when her lover gives her a sadistic dressing-down (both physically and symbolically) before walking out for good—all predictably Fassbinderesque, since in his lexicon the only truth more constant than man's inhumanity to man is the viciousness of the sexually aberrant toward one another.

Elvira is succored by a succession of well-meaning females: his stoical ex-wife, the nun who raised Elvira during his arid boyhood, and most particularly the prostitute Zora (hilariously sketched by Ingrid Caven, a Fassbinder mainstay), a haggard sprite who scampers about in shorts and bedraggled fun-furs and lulls Elvira to sleep with fairy stories more lurid than the Grimms ever compiled. Before embracing his grim destiny, Elvira wanders through the abattoir where he once worked (gruesome shots of cows being slaughtered while Elvira recites a dispassionate litany of his early catastrophes) and the convent that once sheltered him, finally paying a call on the depraved sensualist turned real estate magnate who first convinced Elvira to change his sex.

All of which transpires in the patented Fassbinder manner. He snakes the camera through murky, claustrophobic decors, muddies the narrative with lots of post-Godard temporal disorientation, and overlays the whole with asynchronous monologues by Elvira and others dredging up his misbegotten past. Moreover, as usual Fassbinder defiantly flouts the usual notions of movie plausibility; while everyone on screen seems to view Elvira as indisputably female (albeit a rather exotic case), the actor Fassbinder has chosen to play her looks more like a pudgy bruiser who'd been blindfolded and forced to rummage through the wrong closet. It's hard to accept *In the Year of Thirteen Moons* simply as an examination of society's oppression of its human marginalia, since Fassbinder himself takes such evident delight in humiliating his protagonist. The director's own mean-spiritedness and his overly precious stylistic tics make this film suffocating to watch.

THE VENERATED POLISH director Andrzej Wajda also contributed two films this year, and his ***Without Anesthesia***, in its doggedly naturalistic fashion, is also concerned with its hero's final fall from grace. Here, however, the character in question is a much more conventional sort, and one who by the usual standards has considerably more to lose. Wajda's protagonist is a portly, rather smug journalist who has come to take for granted those cherished perks that attach to his position in the classless utopia. His complacency starts to ebb when his wife suddenly decides to leave him for another—and ideologically trendier—man. At the same time, he sees ominous signals that his professional status is slipping: a lost assignment, a cancelled seminar at the university, and worst of all, the cancellation of his subscriptions to *Stern* and *Newsweek*. As the hapless reporter, Zbigniew Zapasiewicz traces this downward arc from frustration to

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hopelessness with telling restraint, but the film surrounding him is too verbose and programmatically outlined to deliver the emotional charge it aims for.

Wajda's other entry, ***The Young Girls of Wilko***, could scarcely be more different in manner, and offers a far more compelling sampling of this director's multifaceted talents. This is a rueful pastorale set in the presocialist twenties; a handsome, emotionally isolated war veteran (Daniel Olbrychski) comes home and renews his boyhood acquaintance with the five sisters summering at a neighboring estate. Although fifteen years have passed and most of the women have married, their bond to their former swain is as troublesome as ever. Each is drawn to him yet repelled by his diffidence, while he flirts with each but commits himself to none.

Wajda's languid rhythms are perfectly suited to this bucolic intrigue; although *Without Anesthesia* frequently bogs down in the overly concrete, Wajda's reticent treatment of the material here is what gives it its richness. He takes casual note of the selfish indolence of these members of a redundant leisure class, but what really interests Wajda is the personal equation—the allegiances and jealousies that bind and divide the five sisters and their erstwhile heartthrob. What speaks loudest are the things that remain unsaid—the hero's possible reponsibility for the death of a sixth sister, long-departed; the lifelong numbness for which his tales of wartime horrors were only a feeble pretext. Like nearly all the best entries in this year's festival, *The Young Girls of Wilko* doesn't bother with pyrotechnics, wisely choosing to settle for a soft, even glow instead.

Werner Herzog's ***Nosferatu*** returns us to that icy region of the soul where this young German director dwells along with most of his cinematic compatriots. If there ever was a proper vehicle for Herzog's stark, terse minimalism, the Dracula legend is it, considering that penchant of his for the walking undead in every movie he makes.

Nosferatu hews closely to the spirit and structure of F. W. Murnau's silent classic of the same name, and like its precursor it's more eerie than actively terrifying, even when our hero is teething ruminatively on Lucy's fair neck. Klaus Kinski's vampire is a near-identical twin to the original of Max Schreck—his face a chalky effigy, fingers like wax mourning tapers, ears resembling massive wads of chewed gum. This melancholy count is as much victim as victimizer—he's genetically programmed to indulge in his sanguinary repasts, forced to persevere while longing for the mortal release that never comes.

Herzog strips the story to its essentials, foregoing the copious bloodlettings and special effects phantasmagoria that have usually accompanied Dracula's movie progeny. The result has the disarmingly primitive quality of a parochial folk tale, complete with hapless burghers and tongue-clucking gypsies disconcerted by the presence of the zombie in their midst. Moreover, the wintry blue filtered views of Delft (standing in for the story's original Bremen) give just the right sense of silent horror. For once Herzog's own artistic anemia has met its screen doppelgänger, and the mating of the two has a creepy fascination all its own. ❑

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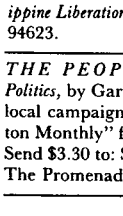

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